// **THE WALKING DEAD** MICHAEL CUDLITZ ON ABRAHAM FORD'S FUTURE

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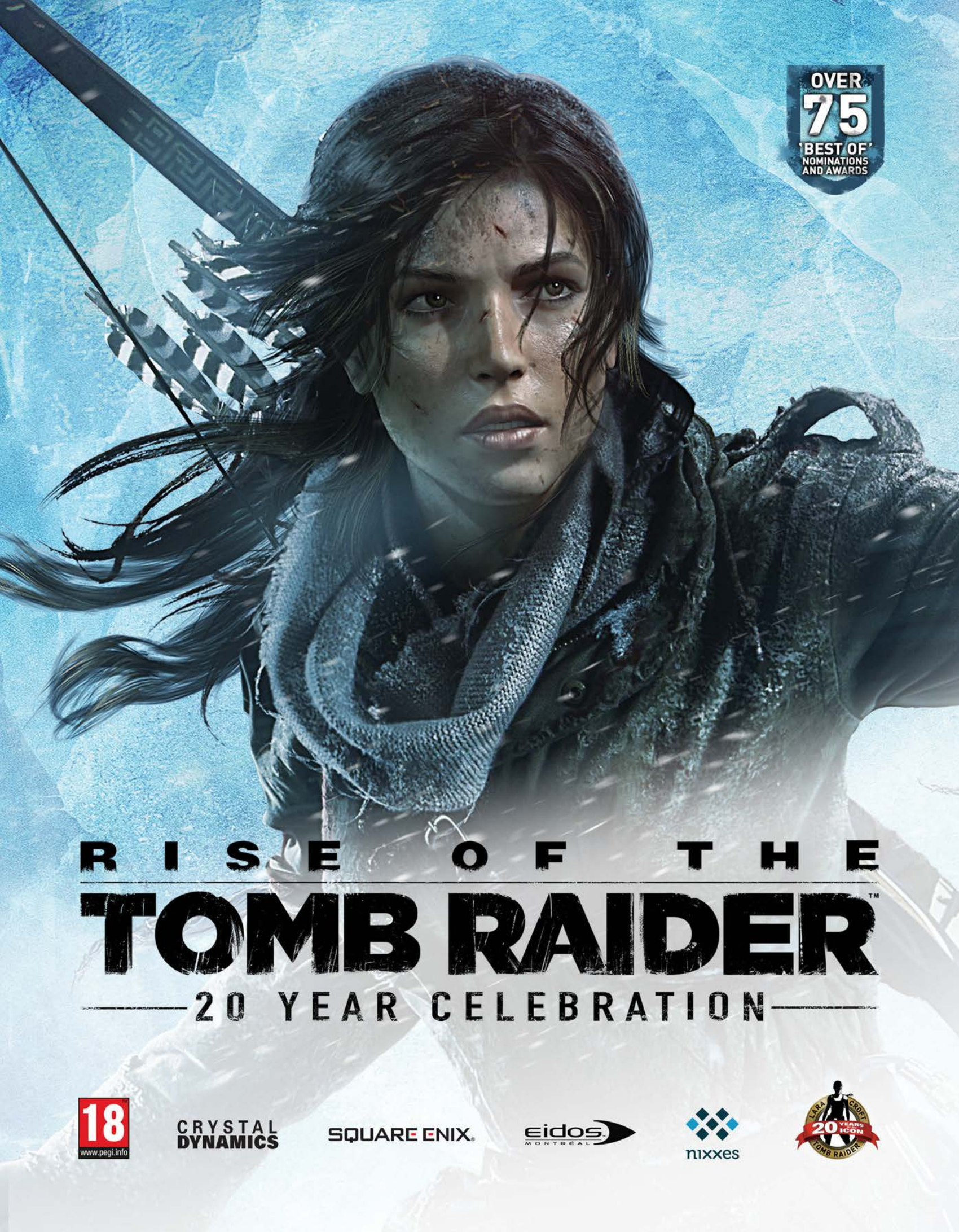


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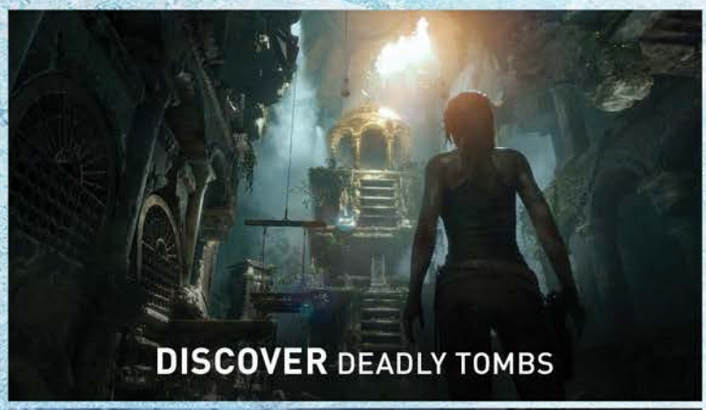
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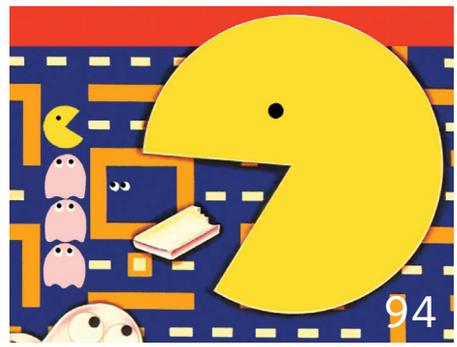


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Paul occasionally dresses up as a Ghostbuster and parades around the house with the Hoover on his back. Keep Bustin' Paul.



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ROB BURMAN

Determined to get his family to play something other than Cluedo at Christmas, Rob is on a constant hunt to discover great board games.



HUGH DAVID

With an in-depth knowledge of global genre film, television and animation, Hugh has seen more geeky films than you've had Star Wars toys.



JONATHAN CLEMENTS

Jonathan Clements' latest book is Christ's Samurai: The True Story of the Shimabara Rebellion, all about teenage sorcerers. Because... Japan.

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WELCOME...

In 29 years of working in publishing it has always been my ambition to edit a magazine with Blade Runner on the cover, my favourite movie of all-time. I thought I had missed the boat again when I took over Geeky Monkey the month after issue three's Blade Runner special, but as you will have seen, my ambition has finally been achieved. With seven versions of Ridley Scott's opus out there, we've been rewatching them to decide once and for all which is the definitive movie. I also had a chat with the man who created the Esper Photo Analysis machine effects, turns out he works over the road. Small world!

Of course, the big happening in TV this month is season seven of The Walking Dead, where we get to find out who bought it from Negan's Lucille. Maybe it's a coincidence that we have an interview with Michael Cudlitz who plays Abraham Ford in the show, maybe not – we're sending this issue to press days before the show starts. Also this issue, we examine the work of Terry Gilliam, explore Japan's body horror manga, anime and movies and I try to play Pac-Man and E.T. on the Atari 2600, but soon find some things are best left buried in the desert.

If you're loving Geeky Monkey please spread the word to your equally geeky mates. Ask any friendly newsagent and they can make sure your new copy is waiting for you each month. I love your feedback, so do get in touch through Facebook, Twitter or use an Apple Newton. Enjoy.

Nick Roberts

NICK ROBERTS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

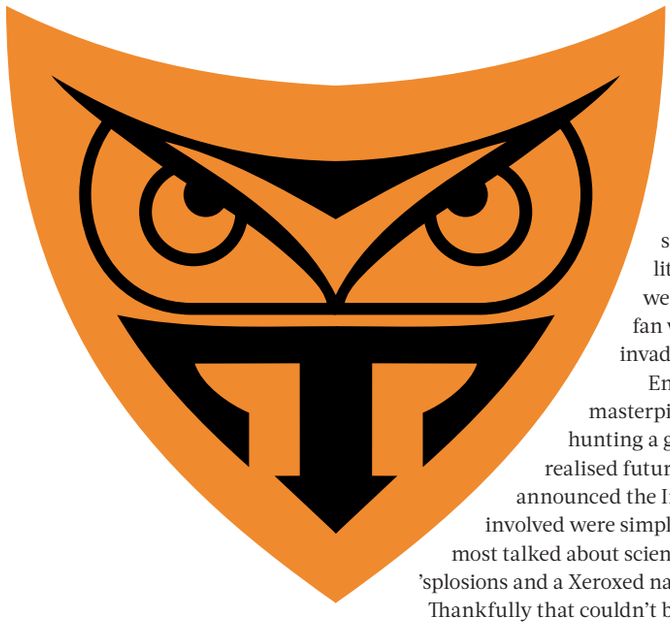


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ENHANCE 2-24 TO 1-76

BLADE RUNNER'S 7 CUTS

GEEKY MONKEY DELVES DEEP INTO THE ORIGINS OF THE SEVEN DIFFERENT BLADE RUNNER CUTS IN SEARCH OF THE BEST VERSION OF RIDLEY SCOTT'S FUTURISTIC NEO NOIR MASTERPIECE.



Hollywood appears to be in the midst of a massive creative slump, with most studios opting not to take chances on original, daring material for fear of taking substantial losses. Instead the suits in La-La-Land are digging deep into the archives to plunder yesteryear's movies and repackage them with either a gender twist or sometimes simply just updating them for a modern day audience. There is little to no creative spin, resulting in most of the lifeless remakes we've been fed recently. Frankly, it's a worrying time to be a film fan with half-hearted rehashes and a slew of superhero flicks invading multiplexes every month.

Enter Blade Runner 2049, the upcoming sequel to the 1982 masterpiece that followed Harrison Ford's ex-cop, Rick Deckard, hunting a gang of rogue Replicants across one of the most breathtakingly realised futuristic cities ever committed to celluloid. When the revival was announced the Internet lost its collective mind, assuming that the moneymen involved were simply going to reboot the flick and sully what is arguably one of the most talked about science fiction films of all time with overcooked CGI, more 'splosions and a Xeroxed narrative.

Thankfully that couldn't be further from the truth, because this revival is eschewing the reboot route in favour of delivering a full-blown sequel 35 years on from the original, complete with a powerhouse production team behind the wheel. Original director Ridley Scott is returning to oversee the project in a producing capacity, and even brought back the original writer, Hampton Fancher, to pen the script. Stepping into the director's chair is French-Canadian megaphone wielder, Dennis Villeneuve, who has proven on multiple occasions that he can mix thrills with complex narratives and themes in the likes of 2013's Prisoners, last year's Sicario and this year's alien invasion belter, Arrival, starring Amy Adams.

What's interesting about Villeneuve's attachment to the film is that, much like Scott back in 1982, he does not have control over the sequel's final cut. However, with Scott overseeing the sequel we shouldn't be too worried about any studio interference or the possibility of another 35 years of multiple editions, and neither is Villeneuve, who agreed to sign on and relinquish control of final cut because the producers behind the film are close friends and confidants. "I made Prisoners with them, and I knew the environment they would create around me would be very secure," says the director. "The thing I realised about final cut is it's the power of the best cut. I didn't have final cut on Prisoners, but what you saw is the best cut. Sicario is a director's cut; Arrival is a director's cut. My relationship with the people I am working with is very strong. At the end of the day what will win is the best movie." ▸

Words: SEBASTIAN WILLIAMSON

Sebastian is an entertainment writer and movie geek, we also think he may be a Replicant.



And yet despite Villeneuve's optimistic outlook on the final version of Blade Runner 2049 due for release next year, we can't help but cast our minds back to how the creative process unfolded for Ridley Scott from 1982 right through to 2007. To date there are seven different versions of Blade Runner, a lot of which are the product of irksome studio interference that included a cumbersome voiceover and happy ending that Scott ultimately wound up hating and altering twice over the course of his illustrious career – the first in 1992 for Blade Runner: The Director's Cut, and again in 2007 with Blade Runner: The Final Cut, which is the only version of the film he's had complete creative control over.

With seven takes on the same material over the decades there has been plenty of debate as to which one is considered the best, so allow us here at Geeky Monkey to take you on a journey through each of the cuts, the differences and, ultimately, which version you should sit down to ogle once you've finished perusing this feature. There are five available editions of Blade Runner that you can snap up on blu-ray and DVD at pretty reasonable prices right now, including the 2007 Final Cut, the 1982 US Theatrical Cut, the 1982 International Cut, the 1992 Director's Cut and lastly, the rare Work Print iteration from 1982.

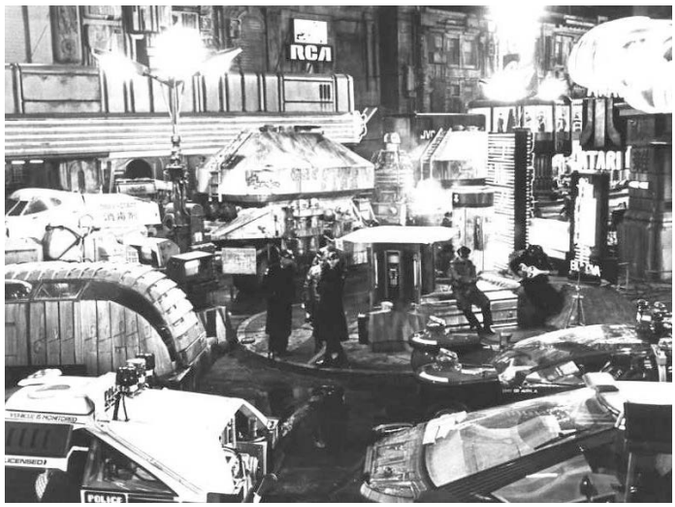
The Work Print version was the first cut of the film to be screened to test audiences in Denver and Dallas back in 1982, but unfortunately for Scott the screenings did not go as planned and the resulting negative feedback led to studio meddling and the birthing of the 1982 US Theatrical Cut. This cut eschews the opening crawl featuring the explanation of Replicants in favour of a definition of the word from the 2016 edition of the New American Dictionary. It also doesn't feature the upbeat ending crafted by the studio and kills the end credits in favour of the words 'The End' once the film wraps up.

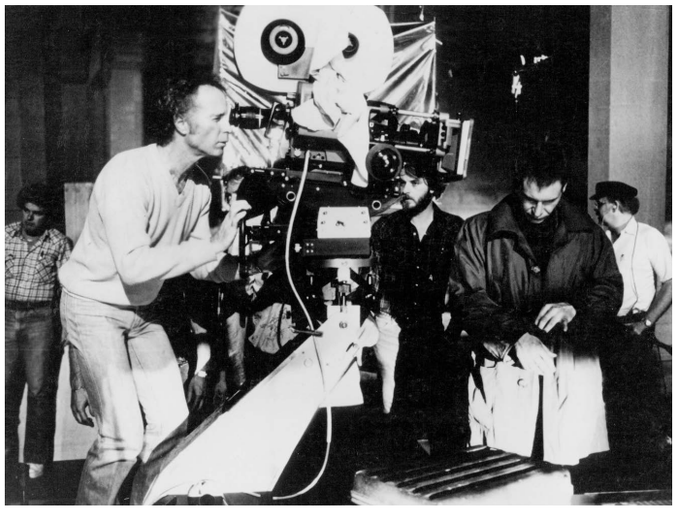
There are other significant differences too, such as the removal of the unicorn dream sequence and alternate shots of Roy Batty's death combined with Deckard's narration as he watches him slip away. While not the best version of the film, it's clear that Blade Runner was way ahead of its time and audiences back then simply didn't get what Scott and his leading man, Harrison Ford, were trying to do on the screen.

"I was touching on possibilities like replication. It's now quite commonplace, but 25 years ago they were barely discussing it in the corridors of power. Now, the film is not really about that at all, it's simply leveraging that possibility into one of those detective film-noir kinds of stories," says the prolific visionary sci-fi director. "People were familiar with that kind of character, but not with the world I was cooking up. I wanted to call it San Angeles, and somebody said, "I don't get it." I said, "You know, San Francisco and Los Angeles." It's bizarre: people only think about what's under their noses until it comes and kicks them in the ass."

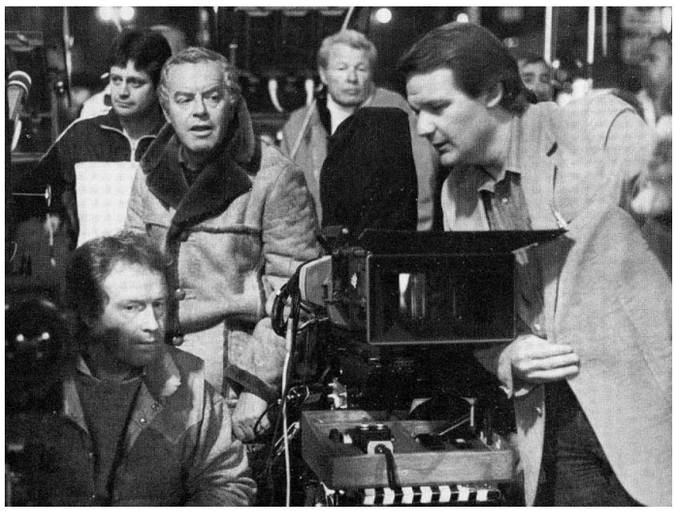
Despite the Work Print's failings during the test screening, this version would later resurface in 1989 when sound preservationist Michael Arick discovered it in the vaults of TODD-AO before purchasing it for Warner Bros under the assumption that it was a 70mm print of the International Cut. It was only when it was screened in 1990 at a film festival in LA that fans realised they were in fact seeing the 1982 Dallas/Denver version. The success of that screening amongst film fans led to three more showings in 1991 and eventually the birthing of the 1992 Director's Cut with Scott's involvement.

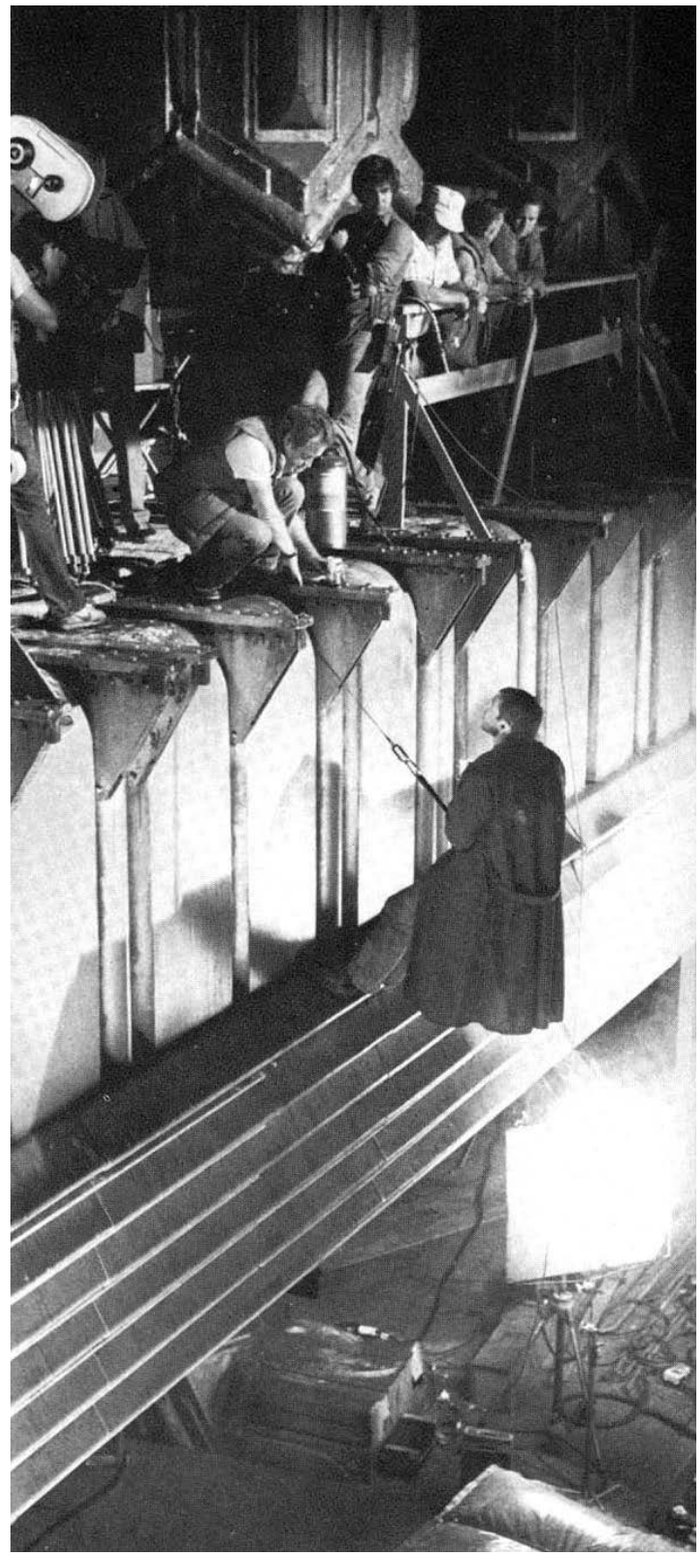
And yet the film was still on course to go through a handful of additional iterations before reaching that milestone, including ▸











“I WAS OBLIGED TO DO THE VOICEOVERS FOR PEOPLE THAT DID NOT REPRESENT THE DIRECTOR’S INTERESTS. I WENT KICKING AND SCREAMING TO THE STUDIO TO RECORD IT”

HARRISON FORD



“THAT’S ABSOLUTE HORSESHIT. THE FILM WAS VERY SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED AND IS TOTALLY COMPLETE. IN THOSE DAYS, THERE WAS MORE DISCUSSION THAN WAS WELCOME”

RIDLEY SCOTT ON ACCUSATIONS BLADE RUNNER IS UNFINISHED

another cut shown in 1982 billed as the San Diego Sneak Peak Preview Version that was practically identical to the 1982 US Theatrical Cut save for three minor tweaks involving the introduction of Roy Batty, Deckard trying to load his weapon after having his fingers broken by the Replicant during the final tussle and lastly, a high-angled shot of Deckard and Rachel riding off into the sunset at the end of the film. These scenes haven’t been seen since and this take on Blade Runner has only ever been screened once, so it’s unlikely this cut will ever make its way into the hands of collectors.

The next incarnation of Blade Runner to hit screens was the US Theatrical release, which is arguably the most meddled with version of the film to date. It featured the optimistic ending with Deckard and Sean Young’s Rachel escaping Los Angeles together, coupled with a plethora of voiceovers that Scott and Ford were forced to insert by the producers after a test screening proved too difficult for the audiences to understand. Well, American audiences at least.

Understandably Scott and, in particular Ford, were extremely unhappy about these last minute additions. “When we started shooting it had been tacitly agreed that the version of the film that we had agreed upon was the version without voiceover narration. It was a fucking nightmare,” says the actor. “I thought that the film had worked without the narration. But now I was stuck recreating that narration. And I was obliged to do the voiceovers for people that did not represent the director’s interests. I went kicking and screaming to the studio to record it.”

Hilariously, these ‘people’ Ford refers to were revealed to be a number of executives at Tandem Productions who wound up hating the film after seeing it an early screening just six months before worldwide release. Their collective notes featured some priceless (and utterly clueless) comments including: “This movie gets worse every screening,” and, more tellingly, “Why is this voiceover track so terrible... were they all on drugs when they did this?”

The fact is the voiceover was intentionally terrible if Hollywood whispers are to be believed, because Ford was rumoured to have delivered the lines poorly in the hopes that the narration wouldn’t make the final cut. However, in 1999 he finally spoke up on the matter and instead explained to fans that he did his best with what he felt was just bad narration.

While the US Theatrical Cut was playing on screens Stateside the International Theatrical Cut was unspooling across the waters with an additional minute of screen time added to the mix. This version of the film would later find its way onto VHS and laserdisc in the USA in 1992 when it was released as a special tenth anniversary edition. As for the differences, they’re minute; three scenes were altered to add



more violence, including Roy's eye-gouging moment with Tyrell, Pris (Daryl Hannah) grabbing Deckard by the nostrils during their brawl and him firing three rounds instead of two when he finally puts her down. The final dollop of extra gore us (seemingly) bloodthirsty Europeans were treated to is seen when Roy pushes the nail through his hand during the duo's rain soaked tussle.

Four years later saw the release of arguably the worst and most bizarre cut, the US Broadcast Version, which was heavily interfered with by CBS who took it upon themselves to dial back on the violence, bad language and nudity in order to meet certain requirements for broadcast TV. CBS reworked the opening crawl text and employed an unknown actor to deliver the opening narration. This version of the film has (rightfully so) never made it onto disc, but has occasionally surfaced on TV over the years, but if there's one cut of Blade Runner we urge you to give a wide berth to over any other, it's this one.

Despite the endless amounts of meddling, the film continued to gain an audience throughout the years in the lead up to the release of the 1992 Director's Cut. Some have even bizarrely suggested the reason for this is that the film could be considered as incomplete, but Scott was quick to shoot this theory down when he uncovered an article postulating this theory prior to the release of the Final Cut in 2007. ▸

DECKARD'S RETURN

RIDLEY SCOTT UNVEILS THE OPENING SCENE OF THE LONG AWAITED BLADE RUNNER 2049.

While Ryan Gosling's unnamed character will lead Blade Runner 2049, Harrison Ford's Rick Deckard will return for the majority of the third act of the film and, more importantly, the film's opening scene according to producer Ridley Scott.

In fact, the first scene is actually a reworked version of the original opening moments of the Blade Runner script from 1982. "We decided to start the film off with the original starting block of the original film," said Scott. "We always loved the idea of a dystopian universe, and we start off at what I describe as a 'factory farm' – what would be a flat land with farming. Wyoming. Flat, not rolling – you can see for 20 miles. No fences, just ploughed, dry dirt. Turn around and you see a massive tree, just dead, but the tree is being supported and kept alive by wires that are holding the tree up."

"It's a bit like The Grapes of Wrath; there's dust, and the tree is still standing. By that tree is a traditional, Grapes of Wrath-type white cottage with a porch. Behind it at a distance of two miles, in the twilight, is this massive combine harvester that's fertilising this ground. You've got 16 Klieg lights on the front, and this combine is four times the size of this cottage. And now a spinner [a flying car] comes flying in, creating dust. Of course, traditionally chased by a dog that barks."

"The doors open, a guy gets out and there you've got Rick Deckard. He walks in to the cottage, opens the door, smells stew, sits down and waits for the guy to pull up to the house to arrive. The guy's seen him, so the guy pulls the combine behind the cottage and it towers three stories above it, and the man climbs down from a ladder – a big man. He steps onto the balcony and he goes to Harrison [Ford]'s side. The cottage actually [creaks]; this guy's got to be 350 pounds. I'm not going to say anything else – you'll have to go see the movie." Roll on October 2017, Blade Runner fans!



REMEMBER THE UNOFFICIAL SEQUELS

IF YOU CAN'T WAIT UNTIL NEXT YEAR FOR BLADE RUNNER 2049, MAY WE SUGGEST PICKING UP A COPY OF THE THREE BOOK SEQUELS WRITTEN BY K.W. JETER AND PUBLISHED BY BANTAM CALLED THE EDGE OF HUMAN, REPLICANT NIGHT AND EYE AND TALON.



The first book chose not to follow Philip K. Dick's original, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep, but instead follow the narrative of the movie with Deckard now living outside Los Angeles before being pulled back into the hunt by Sarah Tyrell, niece of the Replicant creator. Sadly, it's not very good. In fact, it's actually a pretty shockingly lazy rethread of the original film that weirdly resurrects numerous offed characters, including Pris and J. F. Sebastian for some reason.

The subsequent sequels moved the action to Mars and wove in a female Blade Runner storyline that are equally tough reads with the plot chugging along at a snail's pace. Bad plotting, random resurrections and space travel aside, the books are readily available on Amazon, so if you fancy delving back into the world of Deckard on the printed page you can do so for about, oh, a penny.



"That's absolute horseshit. The film was very specifically designed and is totally complete. In those days, there was more discussion than was welcome, as far as I'm concerned. Hampton Fancher, Michael Deeley (the Producer) and I talked and talked and talked – every day for eight months," says Scott. "At the end of the day, there's a lot of me in this script. That's what happens, because that's the kind of director I am. The single hardest thing is getting the bloody thing on paper. Once you've got it on paper, the doing is relatively straightforward."

The first steps towards Scott finally getting the opportunity to realise his true vision came after the trio of Work Print screenings in the early Nineties when he spoke out against the cut and disowned it due to the fact he felt the editing was choppy, it was missing key scenes and lacked Vangelis' score over the climax. Warner Bros quickly pulled further screenings of the print and hired Michael Arick to work with Scott to deliver the new Director's Cut. Sure, it may have done away with the 13 voiceovers, inserted an edited version of the unicorn dream sequence and sliced the chirpy studio ending in favour of ambiguity, but Scott was still not satisfied with it because he couldn't give it his undivided attention due to a commitment to Thelma & Louise.

In the end there is only one definitive version of Blade Runner that we here at Geeky Monkey can wholeheartedly recommend, and that's the 2007 Final Cut, which Scott personally oversaw (something he wasn't allowed to do on the Director's Cut) with restoration guru, Charles de Lauzirika. Work began on the Final Cut in the middle of 2000, before grinding to a halt in 2001 while Warner Bros battled to secure full distribution rights to the film, before eventually settling with all parties in 2006 and announcing both a theatrical re-release alongside a handful of killer box sets on DVD, HD DVD and blu-ray.

With the full length version of the unicorn dream sequence restored and intact, as well as the insertion of the additional violence and alternate edits from the International Cut, Scott was finally able to create the Blade Runner he always wanted the world to see. Without a doubt this is the best version to catch; it's gloomier, yet manages to submerge you in its magnificently crafted world far better than any of the other versions. More importantly, it's never looked better, especially in high definition or on a big screen thanks to the astounding work of the restoration team who scanned the film at the highest possible resolution and rendered the final product at 8,000 lines a frame for the clearest picture.

Now, more than ever, is the time to dust off your copy in preparation for the impending arrival of next year's sequel, Blade Runner 2049. A sequel we know very little about thanks to the huge level of secrecy surrounding it. What we do know is that Harrison Ford will return, but only in a smaller role this time around. According to Scott he will appear in the third act of the film, and also in the opening sequence in a scene that mirrors the original opening of Blade Runner, while Ryan Gosling takes on the lead role alongside a hugely impressive cast that includes Ant-Man's David Dastmalchian, Hiam Abbass, Ana de Armas, Barkhad Abdi, Mackenzie Davis, Robin Wright, Dave Bautista, Lennie James and Jared Letto.

While the story is still shrouded in mystery, Villeneuve has gone on record stating that it takes place decades after the original film in a world where climate change has 'gone berserk', as well as hinting to fans that this new film may delve deep into Deckard's humanity and touch upon one of the greatest mysteries of the first film – is Deckard a human or a Replicant? Scott has said that he believes Deckard is a Replicant, whereas Ford insists he's human, which has resulted in years of speculation and discussion in film schools, bars and forums, but Villeneuve has promised fans that the question will finally be answered next year. "The thing I must say is that I love mystery. I love shadows. I love doubts. I would just want to say to the fans that we will take care of that mystery, I will take care of it," said the director. We hope so, Dennis. We hope so. **GM**

Q&A

Peter Truckel

CREATING BLADE RUNNER'S ESPER PHOTO ANALYSER

As a young animation graduate in 1981, Peter Truckel was happy to take on any job that would test his skills. Little did he realise his work would play a key part in science fiction history, creating the Esper Photo Analysis machine sequence in Blade Runner. We caught up with Peter, now Director of The VFX Hub at Bournemouth University, to analyse his performance...

So how did you get involved in the special FX of Blade Runner?

I did photography and film at London College of Printing, and started specialising in animation. Then I went back and did a post-grad year of animation before getting a job at a company called FilmFex, an animation camera company who'd just done Watership Down, and they did all of the optical FX on Alien. Back in the day they were a really cool company, and everything was film back then. You start, and within a week you're doing title sequences for TV programmes, and it was really great. I loved it.

I had been there about a year, and I used to do a lot of work with a guy called Bernard Lodge, who really is the God of everything. He designed the original title sequence for Doctor Who, which was just camera feedback. He put the Doctor Who logo up, put a camera in front of it, and recorded what looped around, and it was just so brilliant. No one had ever done that before.

After 2001 A Space Odyssey, Bernard became world famous for designing slit-scan stuff, a technique that will take flat images and put them in perspective. Bernard was given the brief by Ridley Scott to come up with something for the Esper sequence. Looking at the film, it was the first foray into steampunk, if you look at the way the cars are done, the add-ons, the air-con on the outside. Bernard looked at that and thought, 'It's not slit-scan this, is something cruder, in a way'. So all we ended up with were big transparencies, blue gels and panning mattes. The screen was



divided into three sections, we just moved mattes around and inbetween it we flashed blue. Back in the day it was different, there were no computers, Bernard had to transpose what was in his head into a list of written and drawn instructions on paper for me, as the cameraman. What he did was phenomenal, he did such a beautiful job on it.

Once I'd shot all of this sequence, it took about eight hours to do one bit, the 'going into the mirror' bit was straightforward, it was just a piece of film and you just super the graphics over the top. Once we'd shot all these panning mattes, where Harrison is going, 'Enhance 2 24 to 1 76', I had to unload the film, rewind it to a sync point, then take that through to an aerial image camera, load it in and down below I had already animated all the digits, the squares, the lines. You literally sync the two up and run it, they go, 'click, click' and its re-exposing the original film to the graphics, so it's all first generation.

Do you think the new film will continue in the same special effects vein as your original work?

I hope if they revisit Esper in the new film they keep its naivety and the clunky steampunk attitude that makes it what it is. It would be so easy now to do a super CSI-type environment thing, but I don't think that's what it's all about. I think you have to stay true to the Philip K Dick novel, put it in the world that he knew, and he was referencing, not transpose it. Nowadays you can do whatever, and I think it would be a mistake.

One of the quotes from Dick when viewing the special effects was,'How is it possible you have put what's in my head on the screen?'

It's a shame he never got to see it finished. I think he would have loved the final Director's Cut, it is a beautiful piece. It's the film that should have been released. That's my favourite, the last version. I think it's got everything. It's got the story Ridley wanted, he went back in: it's got some CGI lights in it, it's regraded. Back in the day they did go for a lot of smoke and backlight, which does give you that milky image. There's that great shot where Rachael is smoking a cigarette, it is beautiful, but the new version has got much more guts. It's like when they regraded Star Wars: films are done for a period. ▸





Jumping around a bit, when I started directing I did four or five commercials with Gil Taylor who lit Star Wars! He would regale you with stories of being in Tunisia with Spielberg and Lucas, because Spielberg went with him on the recces, and saying, 'They never washed, either of them, it was awful!' That's Geeky Monkey gold!

You now work in digital effects, do you prefer modern methods, or the traditional ways?
Before digital came in was, for me, the most exciting period. There were little bits of digital that would sneak through cracks making themselves present, but it was mainly analogue. Every day there was a new development.

Did you read Philip K Dick's book before working on the Blade Runner effects?
Not before, I've read it since. I'm a mad science fiction reader, I have my own book out, The House on Hydrogen Hill, I love science fiction. William Gibson, Philip K Dick, they're great because they're futurologists – they give you an insight. It's like your Arthur C Clarke stuff: some of it comes true, and some of it comes true in a slightly 'alternate universe' sort of way, but Philip K Dick's work was stunning. The Man In The High Castle was such a fantastic series, Netflix and Amazon now deliver such amazing products: it's content that would never work as a movie. It wouldn't do it justice, but spreading it over ten episodes, and hour each, you get some real depth out of it. When the world now is just dominated by endless superhero movies, it's just delightful to see television stepping in and delivering great stuff. But I am looking forward to Doctor Strange!

Had this kind of photo analysis FX been done before, or were you pioneering the technique?
No I don't think so, the great thing about the book and the film, it's not really explained how its done. It just gives you enough. You see he's got a computer, you see he feeds a photograph in, and then somehow... through quantum physics, or whatever, all the possibilities are explored through the grain of the photograph. I've read books recently where cameras are sprayed into a room like mist. Each one captures images,

"I HOPE IF THEY REVISIT ESPER IN THE NEW FILM THEY KEEP ITS NAIVETY AND THE CLUNKY STEAMPUNK ATTITUDE THAT MAKES IT WHAT IT IS"

so it's not that far away from being possible. Photography used to be about capturing the moment, now it's about capturing the data.

I guess Harrison Ford had to work his lines around the film you created?
It was written. He knew what he was going to do. They shot his apartment bit in Shepperton, here in England, whereas everything else was LA. The stuff I shot went off to be put on tape, and it was then played in to a machine on set, and Harrison is looking at it. They did a couple of rehersals to get his timing. So, it was lots of old technology by modern standards, but at the time it was absolutely at the cutting edge.

How do you feel about the future tech you envisaged almost being upon us – it was meant to be Los Angeles 2019?
That's the difficulty when you're making a movie like that and giving it a defined time. Nowadays you've got a 'get out of jail free' saying it's an alternate universe, it's not our timeline, it's a branched off one. I'm loving Mr Robot right now, and Blade Runner is the world of Mr Robot taken further into the future. It's a good thing to buy into that, as naratively it gives you a lot of options, you can reference known stuff but twist it.

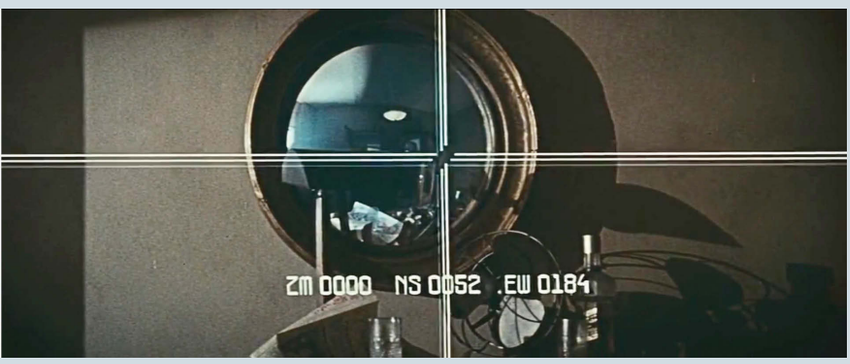
Were you on set when Harrison Ford was 'using' the Esper Photo Analyser?
No, because most of the set was in LA, they only built his bedroom here. I remember I had to shoot it the day after Boxing Day, it was then rushed to the lab in London and then transferred as they were on set the next day. It was a real time crunch on it. Mad days.

Of course, the film went massively over time and over budget...
Yeah, well then the Producers took over and started playing around with the cut, and putting the voiceover on it, which no one wanted. I just think that at the time Ridley didn't have the power that he has now. Nowadays no one would dream of telling him what to do because he's proved himself time and again. Back then the Producers thought they knew better. And you know, it was such a shame as it's still a great film, but I think the last one they put out was the definitive one. Although, it still didn't quite answer, 'is Deckard a Replicant', it still leaves it open. Apparently in the new film he's aged, so he can't be. Thirty years later we get the answer.

What do you think of Blade Runner 2049? Can they top the iconic sequence you made?
I'm looking forward to it. Gosling is good. It's a difficult one isn't it. Everyone is very scared of taking something which is wonderful, it stands out... I tell my students, if you want to look at great model work, look at the city in Blade Runner with the Spinners. It's as good as it's ever going to get that. For me it was the last great model shoot. Nowadays, Weta do lovely stuff, but it is combined with CG elements, so even if you've got a vast knowledge of visual effects, you don't really know what you're looking at.

Were you disappointed in the initial response to Blade Runner from press and cinema goers?
I was just thrilled to see something that I'd worked on in the cinema. I thought stylistically, the fashions, the way it was shot, it was brilliant. Blade Runner comes with an awful lot of backage nowadays because of the history and the troubles in production, but somehow they got it finished. It's only decades later you tell someone, 'I did that Esper sequence' and they go, 'Oh my god, that's my favourite film'. **GM**

Peter's book The House on Hydrogen Hill is out now on Amazon.





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FRONTLINE

THE LATEST HAPPENINGS FROM AROUND THE GEEK DOME...



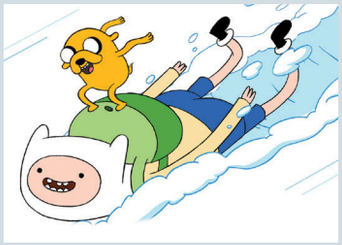


HIGHLIGHTS

// **STAR WARS: BATTLEFRONT DEATHSTAR** "THAT'S NO MOON!" DARTH VADER'S DEADLY SPACE BATTLE STATION COMES TO BATTLEFRONT WITH THE NEW DIGITAL EXPANSION PACK. FIVE NEW MULTIPLAYER MAPS ARE INCLUDED, AND AT LAST WE CAN PLAY AS CHEWBACCA, ALONG WITH TRANDOSHAN BOUNTY HUNTER BOSSK AND A BUNCH OF NEW WEAPONS, VEHICLES, OUTFITS AND A BATTLE STATION GAME MODE.

// **LOGAN** HUGH JACKMAN HAS LET SLIP THAT THE NEW WOLVERINE MOVIE THAT WE'VE ALL BEEN CALLING WOLVERINE 3 WILL ACTUALLY BE TITLED LOGAN. THE MOVIE IS A SEQUEL TO 2013'S THE WOLVERINE AND WILL HIT CINEMAS ON 3 MARCH 2017.

// **THE BATMAN** WHILE WE'RE THINKING ABOUT SNAPPY MOVIE TITLES, BEN AFFLECK HAS JUST WRAPPED UP FILMING AS BATMAN IN JUSTICE LEAGUE, LIKE BATMAN V SUPERMAN, DIRECTED BY ZACK SNYDER. NEXT BATMAN MOVES ON TO HIS SOLO MOVIE, CLEVERLY TITLED THE BATMAN, THAT BEN IS STARRING IN, CO-WRITING AND DIRECTING.



NEWS BITES

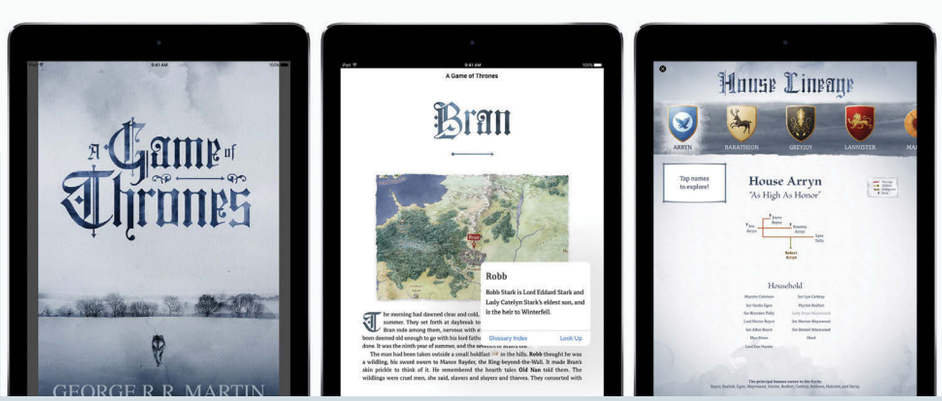
ADVENTURE TIME CANNED

Sad news for fans of cartoon shows with an edge, Cartoon Network has announced that Adventure Time will end in 2018 after eight years and 71 hours of madcap stories. Creator Pendleton Ward has been talking about how proud he feels to have been able to bring a quirky and weird cartoon like Adventure Time to TV. Enough shows are in the can to see us through 2018 to the end of season nine, and we think it would be a great idea for the team to see Finn the Human and Jake the Dog off with a movie. Every great cartoon show needs a movie. Ward commented, "Adventure Time was a passion project for the people on the crew who poured their heart into the art and stories. I'm really happy that it connected with an audience for so long. It's a special thing, I think."



STAN LEE CAMEO QUOTA

He's been in more superhero movies and TV shows than... well, any of his creations! Stan Lee continues his tradition of making a cameo appearance in shows and movies based on his characters by appearing on a poster in Netflix's new Luke Cage show. He has also been filming his walk ons for the next four Marvel movies too, back-to-back in one day in Atlanta, as Marvel President Kevin Feige revealed in a recent Q&A. We reckon one of these will be for Spider-Man: Homecoming as that was shooting in Atlanta at the same time.



GEORGE RR MARTIN & APPLE COLLABORATE

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of A Game of Thrones hitting bookshops, George R. R. Martin has collaborated with Apple to create enhanced versions of the entire A Song Of Ice And Fire series for iBooks. A Game of Thrones is first, but every book in the series will be released over the coming months. The full text of the original novel is of course in the new eBook, but readers can now interact with the book in new immersive ways. Interactive character maps, detailed annotations of locations, a summary of the great houses of Westeros – they are all available at the touch of a screen.

There is a Glossary of terms you can look up at any time, and here's the clever bit, the Glossary grows as the storylines develop through the book. A richly detailed Appendix has the 92 house sigils and comprehensive detail on the allegiances, region, house seat and symbolism that Martin packed into every line.

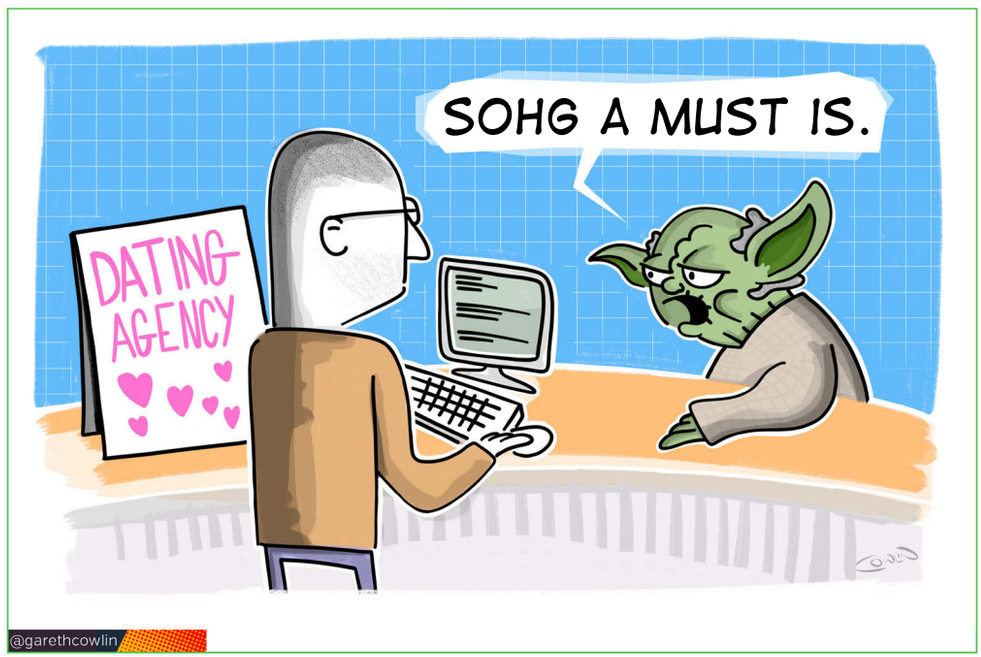
"We're now entering a new period in the history of publishing," commented Martin. "The digital book gives readers the ability to experience all this rich secondary material that had not been possible before. These enhanced editions available only on iBooks include sigils and family trees and glossaries. Anything that confuses you, anything you want to know more about, it's right there at your fingertips. It's an amazing next step in the world of books."

CLASSIC QUOTE

"Driving a Porsche in London is like bringing a Ming vase to a football game."

DOUGLAS ADAMS

THE GEEKY SIDE



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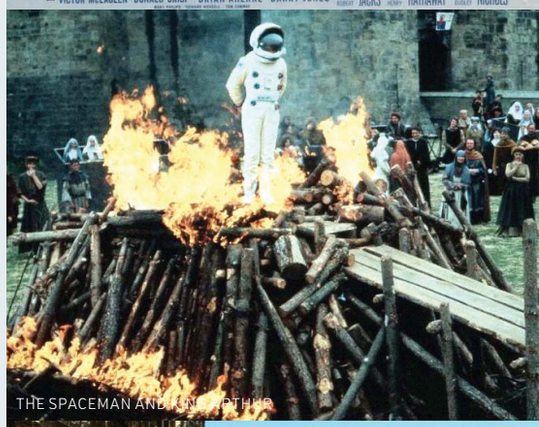


// NORTHUMBERLAND

MAP OF GEEK

CONTINUING OUR GEEKY ROAD TRIP AROUND THE BRITISH ISLES, THIS MONTH WE LAND IN A PLACE FAMED FOR A PARTICULAR CASTLE, WHICH MEANS IT HAS BEEN APPEARING IN MOVIES AND TV FOR DECADES... NORTHUMBERLAND





THE SPACEMAN AND KING ARTHUR



HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE



ROBIN HOOD PRINCE OF THIEVES

Not the first county to spring to mind for geeky destinations, Northumberland nevertheless possesses a few key ones worth visiting, and one that's sadly now gone except for its role on film. Film and TV fans know one particular location best, that of Alnwick Castle, dating back to Norman times and currently the seat of the Duke of Northumberland. A regular location for swashbuckling period pieces, it can be seen in 1954's Arthurian comic strip adaptation Prince Valiant and ITV's The Adventures of Robin Hood that debuted the year after. Another generation's Robin, Robin Of Sherwood, would use is as a stand-in for Nottingham Castle and its exteriors. As such, it would become a familiar site to viewers as its impressive skyline from the opening episode was used as stock footage throughout the rest of that show.

1977's wonderfully-cast BBC version of Count Dracula also shot there, but two years later it would return to being an Arthurian backdrop in Disney's The Spaceman And King Arthur, one of several cracking live-action movies the famed company knocked out in quick succession at the end of the decade and into the next. Many of these qualify as geek classics, including the original Freaky Friday and Escape From Witch Mountain, but Spaceman seems to have been forgotten, even possessing a bizarre US retitling as Unidentified Flying Oddball! Like the castle, it's well worth checking out.

Of course, for Potter fans Alnwick Castle is an essential visit, being one of the many locations that made up Hogwarts in the first two Harry Potter movies. Madam Hooch gives her flying lesson there in the first, and Ron and Harry land the flying Ford Anglia by it in the second.

Yet ANOTHER Robin Hood passed this way in the form of Kevin Costner's Prince Of Thieves, whose walk from Dover to Nottingham inexplicably passes via Sycamore Gap and Hadrian's Wall, where he gives directions to Morgan Freeman's Azeem. A gorgeous part of the Northumberland National Park, it is certainly worth a detour, if not perhaps one of that great distance!

Finally, we remember the defunct Blyth Power Station, formerly located on the northern bank of the River Blyth. In service from 1958 and demolished in 2003, it was one of two locations that served in 1992 as the prison planet's surface in the ill-fated and still under-rated Alien 3. Still, at least it is preserved on film. **GM**



ALIEN 3

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Michael Cudlitz

ACTOR, PLAYS ABRAHAM FORD IN THE WALKING DEAD

It's a communication blackout from AMC as The Walking Dead prepares for its season seven premiere. Magazines go to press weeks before going on sale, so episode one will have happened by the time you read this, and you will know which beloved cast member bought it from Negan's Lucille. But with strict guidelines on what he could and could not say, we had a chat with Michael Cudlitz who plays Abraham about his future with the show...

Did the amount of forensic speculation surrounding the end of the sixth season take you by surprise?

I don't think so – I think I speak for everyone when I say we knew it was going to be big. When we lose, or potentially lose, anyone on the show it's a big event. The fans [laughs]... I laugh because there was so much tension in the last episode and so many opinions about it, 99.9% of that was created by the fans. The fans decided somewhere along the line we were definitely going to meet Negan and someone was going to be killed. We never told them that! They decided that. They met Negan and then they got mad at us because somebody didn't get killed! In its formula it's a typical cliffhanger, but the fans care so much about these characters and the show that they became very upset. I'm not surprised about the enthusiasm. We see the incredible enthusiasm for the show when we travel the world.

Negan does have a presence, so what is like on set around Jeffery Dean Morgan? Does he menace you?

He'll always be Denny [Duquette, Morgan's character in Grey's Anatomy] to me. I loved Denny. I joke about that, but there's a truth to that; there's a warmth to Jeffrey that he carries with him. As arch as he is, or can be as Negan, there is something else in there. You can't see it clearly, but it makes you look for it and wonder about it. That's something about anyone who has played a successful villain in film or TV – if you don't care about that person, then it's not as effective. That you're questioning what's going on, as opposed to just seeing them do these bad things. You care about them, and that's all Jeffrey in what we're seeing, but as well as in the character Robert Kirkman created. Negan's the most awesome bad guy ever, and I think it's transitioned successfully over to TV. It's fun to watch.

Do you like to stand on the side of the set and watch him at work?

Well, we sat on our knees for two nights and watched him do his stuff! [laughs] It's great



and the material is fantastic. A really great job has been done in transitioning the language, to include one of the characters that has language even halfway close to what Abraham has. To come up with those different types of swear words or things we're allowed to say, but still not have Negan sound like Abraham or vice versa – the challenge is the same but to keep the characters different is an even bigger challenge, and they do a good job of it.

Abraham and Negan could have such a verbal tête-à-tête, those two throwing insults at each other. Ten minutes of pure filth would be a good watch.

[Laughs] Absolutely. We do have a world where Negan and Abraham co-exist simultaneously, which isn't the case in the graphic novel. We'll see where it goes from there.

And is Negan and his group really so different to yours? Are they not just a group who've moved on an evolutionary step to survive? He asks for half of what you have and you did the same to the Hilltop – are they not just higher up the food chain?

I think all of it has to do with perspective. If our group were to come across our group, we would kill them. It depends on whose lens you're looking through and the audience is looking through our lens, through Rick's eyes. Not that Rick can't do anything wrong. But Rick and what he stands for, which through extension becomes us and his crew, I do think it's all about perspective. None of these groups started out to be bad guys or to do bad things...

When we're inside a group, no group thinks they're not doing the right thing. Or if they are choosing to do the wrong thing, they're very aware of it.

When you're filming particular sequences for an upcoming season, do you and the cast stand around and speculate how it's going to blow people's minds?

Yeah, absolutely. I've been really, really fortunate and I've worked a lot, but this is easily the most fun I have ever had for an extended period of time at work. I read Abraham lines and will sit back and say, "Holy shit!" People will call me up and say, "Did you read that?"

We all get the scripts and immediately, whatever we're doing... I've pulled over my car on the side of the road and read a script on my phone. Where we have come from, to where we are going next, is as thrilling for the cast and production. We just get to experience it a little bit earlier, but we go through the same emotions as everyone else and we're just as excited when these things happen. As far as reacting like, "Holy Crap, they're going to love this," absolutely.

Abraham underwent huge developments in season six, so what are your hopes for season seven?

I'm curious to see where he heads from here. His past is mission-driven, and everything we do is based in part of what happens in the graphic novel and we know that he did not have a good departure from his family. He was ready to end his life, he didn't want to continue, but now we're in a situation where there are things not only worth dying for, but living for. That's where we're going from here. What does tomorrow hold? What is in the future tomorrow, but down the road? And is there a down the road? It's exciting to see he has come to this place where he looks at relationships with a long-term future, not just immediate satisfaction. **GM**

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THE
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Jabber Talky

OUR GEEK IN RESIDENCE, CLAIRE LIM, TAKES ON A BURNING SUBJECT FROM THE GEEKIVERSE EACH ISSUE. THIS MONTH SHE YELPS... **"IGNORE THE PRESS AND MAKE YOUR OWN MIND UP ABOUT A FILM"**



WITH RESIDENT GEEK, CLAIRE LIM
@WEECLAIRE

It's an absolute joy and a dream come true for me to be able to write about films and TV shows on a regular basis. I'm constantly online and reading magazines, finding out the latest news, checking out the latest reviews and keeping up to date with the latest geek gossip. In my earlier years I would have killed to have this much information at my finger tips, but I've found it can be a blessing and a curse.

Before new movies and TV shows even hit our screens these days I'm reading early reviews and industry gossip about whether something will be a 'hit' or 'miss'. This happened recently with Suicide Squad. I was really excited about this film but the reviews were mixed and the reviews I did check out were telling me to avoid the film. I went along and, sure, it wasn't a great film but I started to wonder whether I should have avoided the reviews and had more of an open mind.

As the months have passed, Suicide Squad's box office numbers have continued to rise and it's one of the most successful films of the year, which is not bad at all considering those mixed reviews. Yeah, I wasn't a fan, but this proves that it was a people pleaser and the public liked this film, they've ignored the press, checked it out and clearly like what they see.

There are so many other films that buck the trend when it comes to bad reviews versus the box office. Michael Bay is a director who churns out hit after hit and whether you love him or hate him, the man responsible for Armageddon, Pearl Harbor and the Transformers franchise knows instinctively how to make films that people love – massive public pleasing spectacles that will never be critically acclaimed, but there is absolutely nothing wrong with a bog standard popcorn movie.

But let's go back a little and remember films that critics panned that have become cult favourites. Back in 1982, when Blade Runner was first released, critics views were mixed; some understood director Ridley Scott's vision but others felt it was too slow paced and a little too weighty in places. Regardless of the reviews though, it has stood the test of time and has gone down in film history as one of the most important sci-fi films in the last 50 years.

A little dafter, but a cult classic nonetheless, is the sequel to Predator, namely Predator 2 starring Danny Glover. Glover's performance was praised as the unlikely action hero but the film was poorly received. Despite this it has gone down as a cult classic amongst Predator fans and is certainly in my top ten – it's a great movie.

Bruce Almighty, The DaVinci Code, Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest, Hancock, Meet The Fockers... the list of big box office hits with poor or mixed reviews goes on and on. Conversely, there have been some films that have been critically acclaimed that have been utter nonsense. Step on up Avatar! Take the 3D element away from Avatar and it's FernGully: The Last Rain Forest in space. Dire.

Using the press as a guide is fine, but it's always best to stick to your guns – if you want to see a film, go support it, and if you enjoy the film then even better! Critics' tastes sometimes differ from the fans and whether a film makes money or not isn't the point either – it's best to switch off and just stand by what you love. Ignore the press and make your own minds up! (Right Claire, you're fired – Ed) **CL**

USING THE PRESS AS A GUIDE IS FINE, BUT IT'S ALWAYS BEST TO STICK TO YOUR GUNS – IF YOU WANT TO SEE A FILM, GO SUPPORT IT



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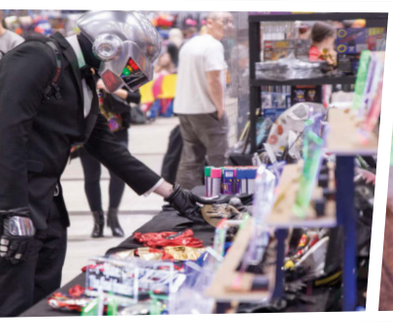
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WITH TWO MORE SHORTENED SEASONS OF GAMES OF THRONES IN THE OFFING, THAT'S THE STORY WRAPPED UP. BUT WAIT. THERE'S TALK OF A PREQUEL AROUND THE HUSHED HALLS OF HBO. IS A PREQUEL A GOOD IDEA?

FIGHTING TALK

A GAME OF THRONES PREQUEL IS...





...all about the money

SAYS CLAIRE LIM

Fans are still recovering from the events of Game of Thrones seventh season – battles, reunions, revelations – it was one hell of a season. As to be expected, the rumour mill is already cranking up as speculation begins about the eighth outing in Westeros, as the entire show starts to wind to an unfortunate end.

Despite this, there have been whispers that a Game of Thrones prequel could be in the works, so fans can quietly rejoice and live in hope that George R. R. Martin will keep us in the world of Westeros for just a little bit longer.

However, on the Emmy Awards red carpet show runner David Benioff stated that he and the team behind the current show will not be returning for any more after the eighth season. If there is to be any sort of prequel then the team that made the TV show so great won't be responsible for anything you see in future.

It's tempting to wish for a prequel considering each season of Game of Thrones has gone from strength to strength. There's a reason why this is one of the most popular shows on TV – the characters and the rich world that Martin has created combined with the team behind the show have made for a compelling watch.

There was a similar air of anticipation when Battlestar Galactica prequel Caprica hit our screens back in 2009. Battlestar Galactica's feel, it's entire ethos and structure, was perfect sci-fi television but Caprica failed to capture the imagination of fans, consequently suffering low ratings and was cancelled.

It's hard to capture the essence and feel of our favourite TV shows (and films). There's something almost magic about the way a cast and crew come together to make perfect TV and it doesn't happen often but shows that go down in history, like Game of Thrones, should remain as standalone series, without prequels.

There's no reason to muddy the waters with a prequel, no matter how tempting it may be for fans and merchandising companies! We don't need any more Game of Thrones and the series should be remembered for what it is, unsullied by a potential prequel that is an unknown, unwritten, with a different cast and crew.

In this current culture of "more, more more," sometimes we need to remember the phrase "less is more." Calls for a prequel are just greedy, but no doubt it will happen because money makes the world go round after all.

©HBO



...just what fans want

SAYS LLOYD MANGRAM

Once a TV show has reached that mass market saturation – millions of worldwide fans, breaking Frasier's record for the most Emmy Awards with 38 after last month's haul and a merchandising bandwagon that is running at full pelt – fans and execs alike want it to continue forever. And it can. Just look at The Simpsons – 28 series, Law & Order – 20 series and South Park – also on 20. If people are enjoying the characters, the settings and the drama of it all, then why deprive them of it? Well, in Game of Thrones case, they are running out of source material, racing ahead of George R. R. Martin's book series like a White Walker out of the snow.

But one solution is to create a spin-off, a prequel to Game of Thrones that will satisfy the hunger in fans for more of Westeros, only set maybe hundreds of years before the happenings in season one back in 2011. As Claire says, sadly showrunners David Benioff and D.B. Weiss have categorically stated that they will be having nothing to do with it, but that doesn't stop the suits at HBO wanting it, and knowing that the fans want it. Give the gig to some up-and-coming TV directors and producers I say. Let them learn from the masters while they're still around, and take the prequel off in a new direction. It's worked well for The Walking Dead, with Fear The Walking Dead treading its own path stylistically and storywise, but giving fans of the zombie horde another bite each week. While The Walking Dead season six brought in an average of 13 million viewers compared to Fear's 6.5 million, that's still a hefty number of people happy to tune in.

The talk within HBO is that, "Seven seasons and out has never been the conversation," according to network President Michael Lombardo last year. Readers of the novels and players of the Fantasy Flight board game will know that there's also a lot of history to the land of Westeros that is only hinted at and could be expanded and explored in a prequel series. The first novel, also titled Game of Thrones, is set after Robert's Rebellion, a civil war between the great Houses of Westeros that took place 17 years before the start of the story as we know it. A prequel? Oh yes, it's exactly what the fans want!

IT'S WORKED WELL FOR THE WALKING DEAD

Eddard Stark sits on the Iron Throne. There is a virtually endless source of Westeros prehistory before season one that a prequel could tap into.

YOUR SAY

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT A POTENTIAL PREQUEL TO GAME OF THRONES? WE ASKED YOU ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER AND THIS IS WHAT YOU SAID...

FIGHTING

I would LOVE to see Robert's Rebellion. Seeing the characters in Game of Thrones become legends is awesome. Seeing how the older characters became legends, would be just as cool. I wanna see Robert Baratheon smash through Rhaegar Targaryen's chest with a war hammer!
IAN OVERTON

I'm not too sure about the idea of a prequel series, though there's more than enough historical and background details were they to do one. I'd rather they adapted the Dunk and Egg novellas. Maybe as a series of TV movies.
BRIAN STABLER

No.
BERNIE BANAWICH

I think as long as George RR Martin has input it could potentially be great but most prequels tend to disappoint I find.
SCOTT

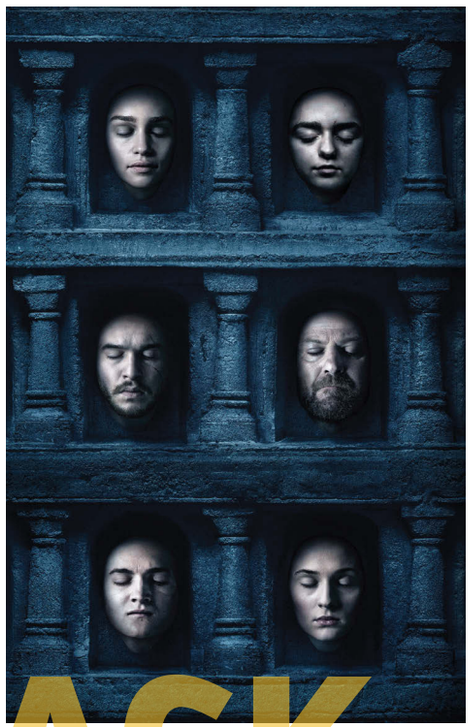
If it's the Hedge Knight then I'm in.
JAMES GREEN

Oh yes! I would love a prequel series to Game of Thrones. There is just so much rich backstory and history in the A Song Of Fire And Ice novels that they have not touched on so far in the TV series that they could even turn it into a regular soap opera... now that's an idea!
HELEN ALLEN

Why do they always have to start talking about prequels? If they want to make more Game of Thrones, just take the story forwards, not backwards. The next season was already making things up for themselves with little involvement from George, so just cut him out of the equation completely and let the TV show forge its own path. There would certainly be a thirst from viewers for it.
DEBBIE HARDWICK

I must admit that the last series was a bit slow in places for me. They seemed to spend forver, and entire episodes, just building up the tension for the end of series finale. The earlier episodes (I'm talking series one and two here) were much better balanced. Perhaps that't because they had the novels to pore over then, rather than going it alone.
ROBERT NICHOLAS

Let the show die a natural death I say, like so many characters.
JASON MALCOLM



BACK



THE GEEKY MONKEY WORLD

WE HAVE A TEAM OF UBERGEEKS THAT BUSY THEMSELVES EACH DAY BRINGING YOU THE LATEST GEEKY GOODNESS TO YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA...

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[FACEBOOK.COM/GEEKYMONKEYMAG]

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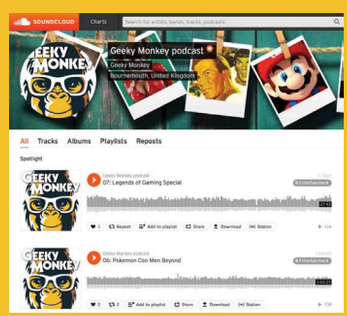
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We bring you geeky nuggets in 140 characters or less, along with polls where you can vote on vital geekery!

PODCAST

[SEARCH "GEEKY MONKEY" ON SOUNDCLOUD OR iTUNES]

We're not only in print you know... our regular podcast hosts Damien St John, Claire Lim and Paul Gannon return for another podcast from Geeky Monkey Towers featuring the usual reviews, opinions and pointless rants, flecked with their typical witty style! Find us on Soundcloud and rate, review and subscribe on iTunes. Search: Geeky Monkey Podcast



WORLDS OF MAGIC

PLANAR CONQUEST





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TEYON WASTELANDS INTERACTIVE MAXIMUM GAMES PS4

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ED: PURPLE RAIN?
SHAUN: NO.
ED: SIGN O' THE TIMES?
SHAUN: DEFINITELY NOT.
ED: THE BATMAN SOUNDTRACK?
SHAUN: THROW IT.

GOING THROUGH SHAUN'S RECORD COLLECTION FOR ZOMBIE FRISBIES

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SHAUN OF THE DEAD
// 2004

directed by
EDGAR WRIGHT

featuring
SIMON PEGG // **SHAUN**
NICK FROST // **ED**
BILL NIGHY // **PHILLIP**
JESSICA STEVENSON // **YVONNE**

What flavour of Cornetto is your favourite? If it's strawberry, then Shaun of the Dead is your zombie movie. Written by Simon Pegg and Edgar Wright, directed by Wright and starring Pegg alongside long-time collaborator Nick Frost, Shaun of the Dead was the first in the team's Cornetto Trilogy, the other two movies being Hot Fuzz and The World's End.

If you've not seen it, Shaun is a 29-year-old electronics shop salesman trying to get some direction in his life, while dealing with problems from his flatmates, girlfriend, mum and stepdad. All while a zombie apocalypse is going on.

The film is packed with references to the geeky movies, TV shows and videogames that Pegg and Wright enjoyed as kids, continuing in the tradition the pair set up in their sitcom Spaced. In fact, the entire movie was itself inspired by the Spaced episode Art where Pegg's character Tim has to fight off a zombie invasion after playing Resident Evil under the influence.

True Geeky Monkey fans will be interested to note that regular writer Paul Gannon actually appears in the movie as a pizza delivery zombie. That's a movie fact you won't find any any pub quiz.

Costing $6.1 million to make, Shaun of the Dead has been a phenomenal success, taking over $30 million at the last count, and topping everyone's zombie movie list, as proved by the poll we ran on Twitter...

WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE ZOMBIE MOVIE OF ALL TIME?

SHAUN OF THE DEAD	**47%**
28 DAYS LATER	**31%**
ZOMBIELAND	**13%**
NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD	**9%**

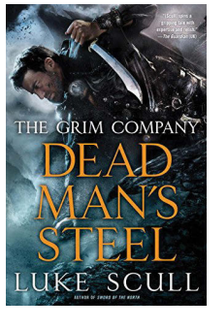
READING MATTERS

Words: JOHN HOULIHAN
Author of the Seraph books and former Editor-in-Chief of CVG.com

FROM AZTEC VAMPIRES TO FANTASY QUEENS, WE'RE IN WORLD-SAVING MODE AND GRIM COMPANY IN THIS MONTH'S MATTERS...

DEAD MAN'S STEEL

LUKE SKULL

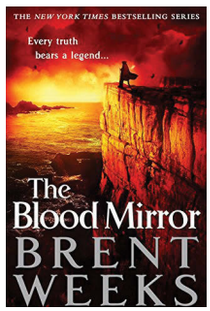


Skull's Grim Company series has been lauded as "fearsome, gripping and gritty," and as well as being possessor of an awesome moniker, he's been hailed as one of the freshest voices in British fantasy. The third book in this series (which follows The Grim Company and Sword of the North) sees Davarus Cole dispatched to the Shattered Realms, where he must contend against the divine spark which lives within him. Elsewhere, Halfmage Eremul has worked himself into an exalted position amongst the Fade, Dorminia's new overlords, but who can he save from their advanced technology? In the north, legendary fighter Brodar Kayne struggles to contain an evil older than mankind itself, but how will these disparate threads weave together to form another classic Skull tale?

HALFMAGE EREMUL HAS WORKED HIMSELF INTO AN EXALTED POSITION AMONGST THE FADE

THE BLOOD MIRROR

BRENT WEEKS

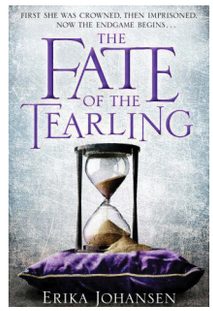


Weeks is certainly prolific and his Night Angel trilogy quickly became an international best seller, yet his new Lightbringer series is perhaps even more accomplished. The saga, which began with 2010's The Black Prism has seen Prism Gavin Guile attempt to hold together a fragile world peace while dealing with a lost son and a vengeful ex. Book four sees Guile stripped of both his empire and his powers and confined in a seemingly escape-proof prison. Yet events from afar bring hope and as the armies of the White King conquer all before them, Guile is the one man who may be capable of saving the world. As the series reaches a compelling climax, will the true identity of the Lightbringer finally be revealed?

LANGUISHING IN THE DUNGEONS OF HER ARCH RIVAL, HER ONE HOPE OF SALVATION IS THE MACE

THE FATE OF THE TEARLING

ERIKA JOHANSEN



Kelsea Glynn is a heroine who has risen from unknown exile to monarch of the Tearling in Johansen's celebrated fantasy series. After overthrowing her debauched uncle and making a sworn enemy of the Red Queen, Kelsea sacrificed both herself and the Tear's magical sapphires to save her realm. Now languishing in the dungeons of her arch rival, her one hope of salvation is the Mace, head of her bodyguard and appointed regent. As powerful forces muster, can the Mace restore harmony, rescue his beloved monarch and defeat the wiles of her deadliest enemy in another superior helping of magical fantasy?

CERTAIN DARK THINGS

SILVIA MORENO-GARCIA



After two impressive short story collections, Canadian Silvia Moreno-Garcia's Signal to Noise marked the debut of an intriguing talent and this, her second novel, promises even more. Set in Mexico City, it sees an ancient blood-drinking Aztec vampire befriend a streetwise scavenger kid, who quickly becomes infatuated with her. As gangsters, cops and rival narco-clan vampires circle, will the unlikely pair be able to escape the city before a truly terrible fate overtakes them? A moody mixture of humans, cops, vampires and gangsters.


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DON'T MISS



[THE BIG ONE]

The Walking Dead, Season 7

PREMIERE DATE, 24 OCTOBER // STUDIO, AMC // UK NETWORK, FOX UK

Print deadlines, eh? Who'd have 'em? The Walking Dead launches its long awaited seventh season on Fox on 24 October – just before this issue of Geeky Monkey hits the shelves. We'll be taking a more in-depth look at a review in our next issue, but for now let's examine what we know in advance, from the glorious position of possibility.

First thing's first – as is customary, Fox will be airing The Walking Dead a mere 24 hours after it's Stateside screening, so you may need to carefully vet your Twitter account until you've caught up. This goes double for the opening moments of the season premiere, which promises the latest "OMG!" character demise when we discover which unfortunate soul met their maker at the hands of the psychopathic Negan and his beloved barbed wire wrapped baseball bat Lucille. Yes, yes, we know; you promised yourself that the cliffhanger that concluded season six was a cop-out too far, and that you wouldn't give The Walking Dead the satisfaction of sucking you in any longer. It's OK, we all said it. We'll all still be watching. There's no judgement here.

So, what do we know about this seventh season, aside from the fact the opening moments are going to be grislier than London Zoo's bear enclosure? Well, firstly it seems that it's advisable to keep a therapist's phone number on speed dial for the next eight Tuesday mornings, until the mid-season break gives us a chance to take a breather. The promotional poster for American network AMC features a devilishly grinning Negan (portrayed in a slice of pitch perfect casting by Jeffrey Dean Morgan) promising "we're just getting started," and Michael Cudiltz, better known as military man Abraham Ford, has promised fans frustrated by season six's conclusion that this opening episode "will be very emotional, but very satisfying as well... that scene, and the relationship you're seeing with Negan and the group, that will set the tone moving forward. How that changes, if that changes, someone else is in charge and it's going to be really interesting moving forward."

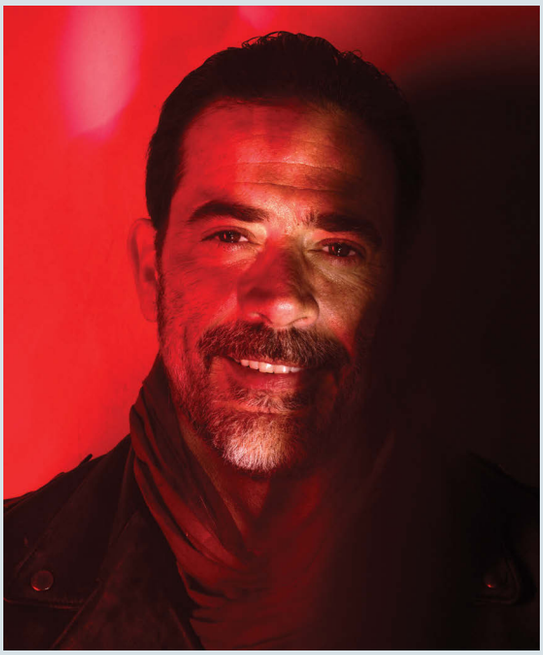
> ANDREW LINCOLN HAS DESCRIBED HIS CHARACTER AS "BROKEN," AND THAT, "HE'S POWERLESS"

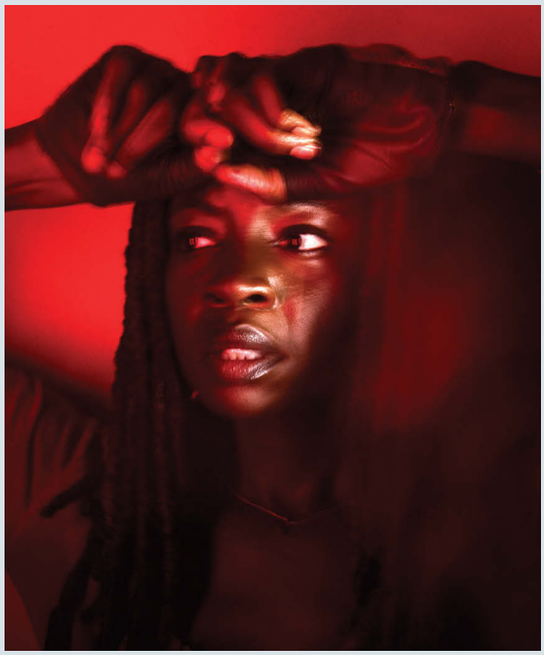
Is that a hint that Rick Grimes may not be as safe as we have assumed? Andrew Lincoln has described his character as "broken," and that, "he's powerless for the first time since he woke up from the coma. Everything he's worked for, for two years, has been shattered in 24 hours. So he's not in a good space and I think if he makes it through the first episode, then he's different. He'll be a different man." They wouldn't, would they?

Onto cheerier matters, however, and we have been promised fresh blood, brains and entrails in the form of three new characters. We'll finally meet King Ezekial and his pet tiger Shiva, one of the most visually striking components of the comic book yet to make it to screen. Expect to meet this self-appointed monarch by the third episode of the season, offering a welcome ray of light after the deepest trauma of Negan's shenanigans. Two new female characters will also be making their bows; a perky teenager named Jennie (a love interest for Carl, perhaps?), alongside a slightly older survivor named Naomi. A horseback-riding hardass named Rodgers is set to round out the new additions to the call sheet. **GM**

Produced by AMC and broadcast by FOX UK, The Walking Dead season seven is showing now.

©GENE PAGE/AMC, FRANK OCKENFELS 3/AMC






FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

Something Fantasic this way comes...

Question: When is a Harry Potter film not a Harry Potter film? Well, when Harry Potter himself isn't in it at all for a start. And with a setting in 1920's Manhattan and a cast including such non-Potter veterans as Eddie Redmayne and Colin Farrell, many uninitiated muggles would be forgiven for thinking that with not a Weasley, a Hermione or even a Malfoy in sight, this has nothing to do with the JK Rowling's saga. They couldn't be more wrong: it's the closest thing to a brand new Harry Potter film since Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows Part II five years ago. And yet, at the same time, it's something quite different.

This is the big screen version of the lightweight spin-off volume of the same name, purportedly written by one Newt Scamander for Comic Relief and published just as Pottermania was really starting to take hold back in 2001. The film is not so much an adaptation, however, as the story which lies behind the writing of the book, namely author Newt Scamander as he encounters all manner of witches, wizards and magic folk as well as the assorted fantastic beasts referred to in the title.

And that's not all. The new film is set to be the first in a new trilogy, wholly distinctive but nevertheless intrinsically linked to Harry Potter. The second film is scheduled for release in the autumn of 2018 with the third and final part planned for another two years after that again in 2020.

Wary Potter fans, fearful of a loss of continuity between this and the original series need not worry. For one thing, Fantastic Beasts is directed by David Yates, the man who has directed more Harry Potter films than anyone alive. The new film also represents the movie screen writing debut of JK Rowling herself, promoted from her usual producer roles. With a sizable inbuilt following virtually guaranteed from the vast Harry Potter fan-base, Fantastic Beasts seems very likely to benefit from some of the Potter box office magic. **GM**

YES, LEDERHOSEN...

It's an all too common story these days: a group of snowboarders are surrounded by a group of malevolent zombies on the Alps. As you may have guessed, this offering from director Dominik Hartl is unlikely to be troubling the American Academy this year, but if you like your Halloween fare on the silly side, this could prove an acceptable addition to the admittedly already overcrowded comedy zombie film genre. And let's face it: zombies are as likely to attack you on the Alps as anywhere else.



28 October

* **Attack Of The Lederhosen Zombies**
  // MUSICFILMNETWORK
* **Let's Be Evil**
  // VERTIGO

4 November

* **The Accountant**
  // WARNER BROS

10 November

* **Arrival**
  // ENTERTAINMENT ONE

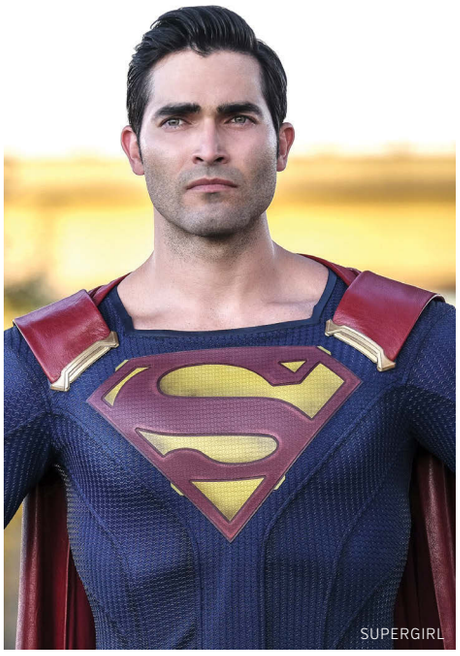
11 November

* **American Pastoral**
  // ENTERTAINMENT FILM
* **Dog Eat Dog**
  // SIGNATURE ENTERTAINMENT
* **Panic**
  // TRINITY FILMS

18 November

* **Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them**
  // WARNER BROS
* **We Are The Flesh**
  // ARROW FILMS

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SUPERGIRL


ARROW


THE FLASH

Welcome to Superhero Season...

Heads up comic books fans, you're in for a treat this month with the return of three superhero shows, including The Flash, Arrow and Supergirl, who is now part of The CW Network and the DC small screen universe. What does the network shift for the character mean? Crossovers galore, according to star Melissa Benoist. "I think the sky is the limit for crossovers. That's what's so great about these characters, and that we're all on the same network now and we're all in the same universe, technically. I think people want to see all of them interact and fight together."

Oh, and did we mention that Kara's cousin, Superman, will be joining her for a handful of episodes this season? It's a pretty daring move on behalf of the show's creators, and while some say it's a desperate attempt to boost ratings, we can't help but feel a sense of giddy excitement at the prospect of seeing the two characters duke it out with a whole host of villains side-by-side. Played by Teen Wolf star Tyler Hoechlin who looks, well, suitably super, Superman has been grabbing a lot of headlines in the run-up to the show's premiere, so much so it feels like The CW is focusing just a little too much on Hoechlin's character rather than the show's titular hero.

Next up is Arrow with Oliver Queen's journey, originally set up in the pilot, apparently coming full circle when he finishes up his flashback metamorphosis from playboy douchebag to superhero. Of course, it won't be easy because Queen will have to contend with the show's latest big bad, Prometheus. Executive producer, Marc Guggenheim has said this latest season will feature many twists and turns, as well as numerous references to that first season that premiered back in 2012. "As the season progresses, you'll see that there are a lot of callbacks to season one," says Guggenheim. "What we're doing is we're dramatizing Oliver's desire to grow, move forward, and evolve, but this concept of legacy keeps threatening to pull him back to the early days."

Last up is The Flash season three, where fans will get to see what the future holds for Barry Allen now that he's messed with the timestreams. Based on the Flashpoint crossover miniseries, this new season begins with Barry living out a blissful existence in an alternate reality with his parents still alive and his first date with Iris West on the cards. Naturally, things won't stay rosy for long, particularly when he starts to forget parts of his old life and the Reverse Flash shows up warning him that there will be disastrous consequences for his loved ones if he continues to try and live out this cutesy existence in the alternate world.

If superheroes aren't your thing then fear not intrepid TV explorer, because Netflix is resurrecting Charlie Brooker's acclaimed series, Black Mirror. With 12 episodes ordered, the first six of which arriving on the service this month, expect the same blend of creativity, intrigue and outright madness that made the first two seasons of Brooker's creation such an absolute joy to watch. We're not getting into any spoilers here, but it's safe to say that Brooker may have only gone and created the year's best telly show. **GM**

Streaming

* **Stranger Things, Season 1**
  // NETFLIX
* **Luke Cage, Season 1**
  // NETFLIX
* **Black Mirror, Season 3**
  // NETFLIX

22 October

* **Class**
  // BBC THREE

24 October

* **Supergirl, Season 2**
  // SKY1
* **The Walking Dead, Season 7**
  // FOX UK

25 October

* **The Flash, Season 3**
  // SKY1

26 October

* **Arrow, Season 5**
  // SKY1

17 November

* **The Grand Tour**
  // AMAZON PRIME

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CALL OF DUTY: INFINITE WARFARE ZOMBIES IN SPACELAND

Zombies, in a theme park disco, in the 80s

When Call of Duty: Infinite War is released on the 4th of November it will be, as some might say, totally bitchin'.

Now that's not simply because it features a futuristic setting and tech, and dogfights in space, or because you'll get to shoot Jon Snow (or at least Kit Harington) in the face. And not even because those of you who shell out £70 for a super version of the game will get the magnificent Modern Warfare Remastered. Nope. It also features zombies. In a theme park. In the 1980s.

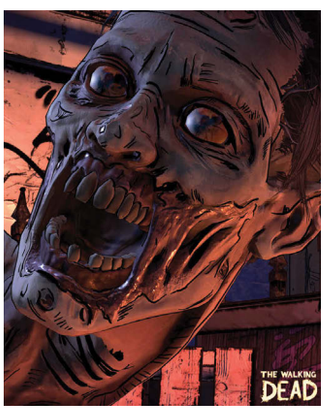
Still not convinced? How about we add a few details, like how music in Zombies In Spaceland will be provided by DJ David Hasselhoff, and how Pee Wee Herman (or at least Paul Reubens) acts as the multiplayer co-op mode's antagonist? Or how four players will take on the heavily stereotypical Breakfast Club of roles and so there's the Jock, the Nerd, the Valley Girl (who, as if she's been trained by Moon Zappa herself, gets to gag zombies with a spoon) and the rhyme-slinging Rapper (who raps)? It gets better, and possibly even more 'totally radical'.

You'll also be able to activate rides as well as set traps to slay the undead, and even persuade them to dance on a disco floor before cleaving them in half with a laser. You can craft and customise weapons too. Many will feature in the main Infinite War experience while others will be totally unique to Spaceland's far-out setting.

Best of all, as the undead bodies hit the floor in various mutilated states of distress they'll often drop special tokens, some of which can be used in the park's arcade. Should you find yourself dead, instead of entering spectator mode you'll be able to enjoy classic carnival games as well as such retro Activision titles like Pitfall 2. Awe-some! **GM**

GROWING PAINS

November will also see the release of the first episode of the third season of Telltale's The Walking Dead series, so if you're into zombies, you're certainly heading towards a jackpot month. Set four years after the outbreak, The New Frontier will feature a now teenage Clementine, still voiced by the now 41 year-old Melissa Hutchison, who teams up with Javier, a bloke who's having trouble keeping his family together in a world ravaged by the undead, as they deal with new and vicious rules of law and order. And zombies.



28 October

* **Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim Special Edition**
  // PS4, XB1, PC
* **Titanfall 2**
  // PS4, XB1, PC
* **Dragonball Xenoverse 2**
  // PS4, XB1

4 November

* **Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare**
  // PS4, XB1, PC

11 November

* **Dishonored 2**
  // PS4, XB1, PC

15 November

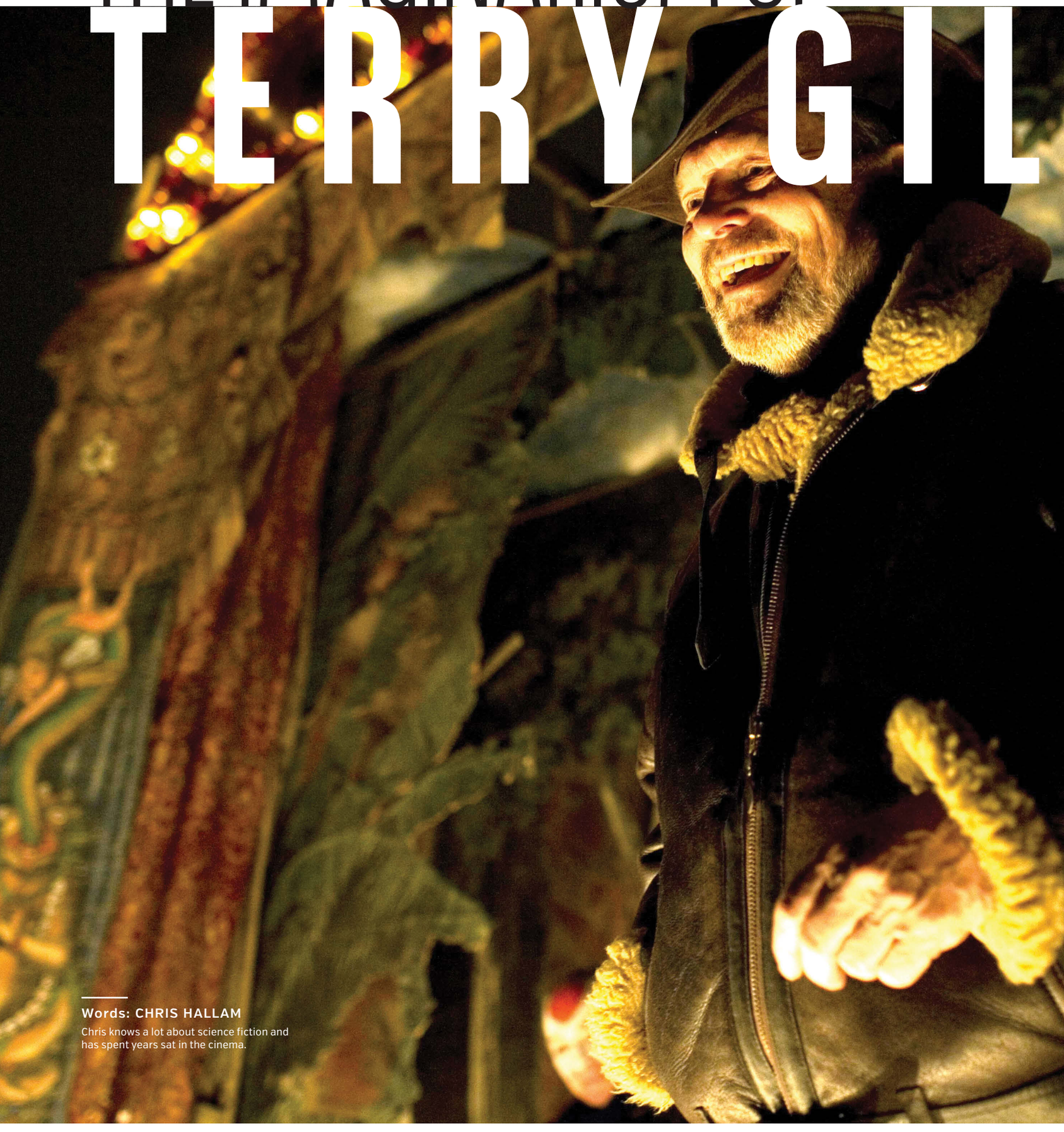
* **Watch Dogs 2**
  // PS4, XB1, PC

18 November

* **Assassin's Creed: The Ezio Collection**
  // PS4, XB1
* **The Walking Dead Telltale Series: The New Frontier**
  // PS4, XB1, PS3, 360


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THE IMAGINARIUM OF TERRY GIL

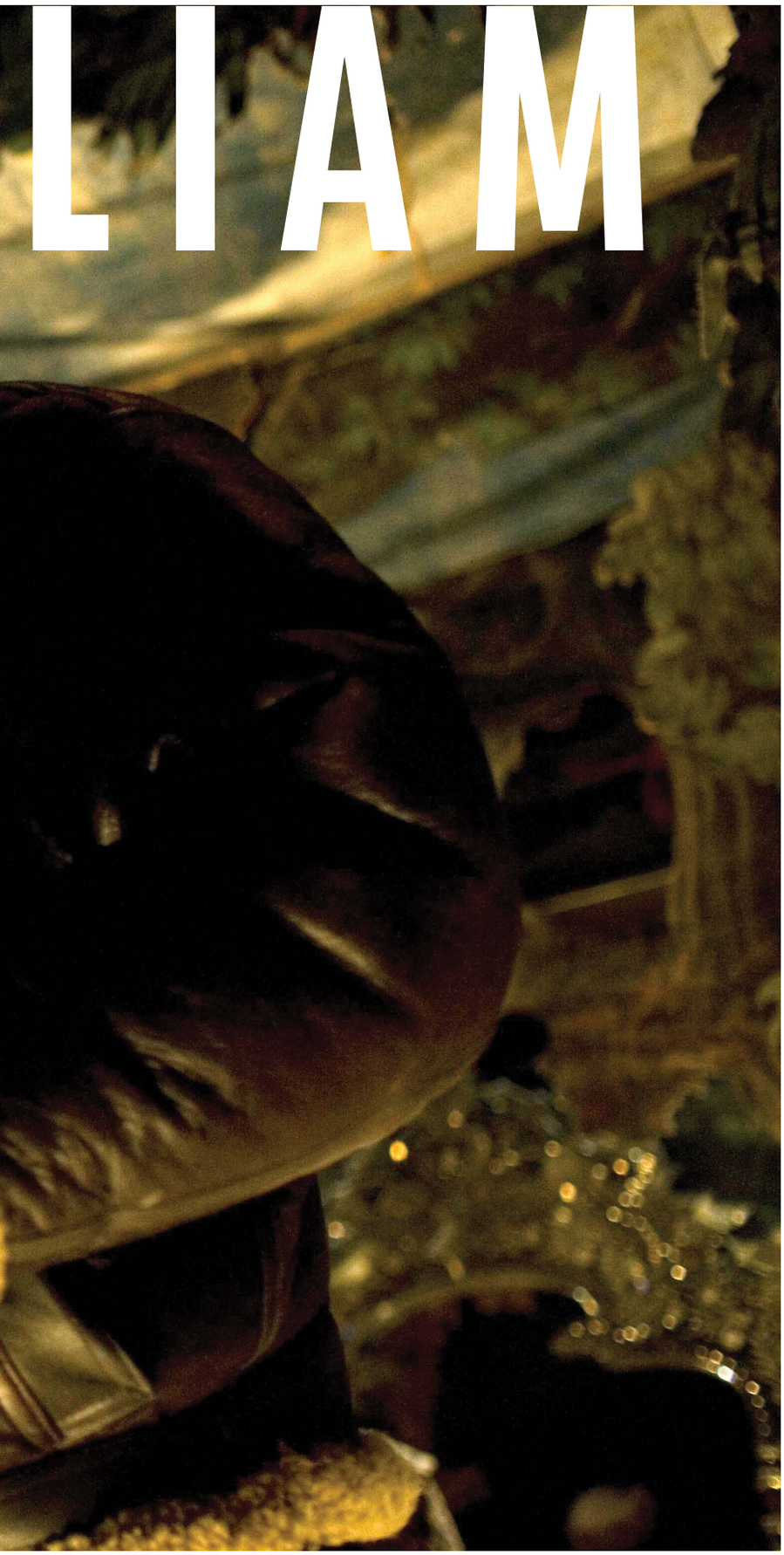


Words: CHRIS HALLAM

Chris knows a lot about science fiction and has spent years sat in the cinema.

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LIAM



FROM TIME BANDITS TO 12 MONKEYS, BARON MUNCHAUSEN TO BRAZIL, THE FISHER KING TO THE BROTHERS GRIMM, OVER MORE THAN FOUR DECADES TERRY GILLIAM HAS MADE HIS MARK WITH SOME OF THE MOST VISUALLY DISTINCTIVE SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FILMS EVER CREATED. BUT WITH AS MANY LOWS AS THERE HAVE BEEN HIGHS, HAS GILLIAM SOMETIMES BEEN HIS OWN WORST ENEMY? AND IS IT NOW POSSIBLE TO SAY SOMETHING IS GILLIAMSEQUE? AND, IF SO, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

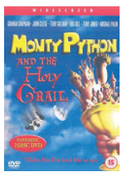
"AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT..."

The famous announcement by John Cleese in Monty Python's Flying Circus would typically be followed by something very different from the norm indeed. And few sequences were more unusual than those concocted by his fellow Python, genius animator Terry Gilliiam.

For even amongst the decidedly unusual ranks of Monty Python, Gilliam rather stood out. For one thing, he was American. For another, unlike all the other Pythons, he hadn't been to Oxford or Cambridge. Gilliam clearly had a distinct visual style all of his own. He may not have performed on screen as much as the other Pythons – although did appear in the famous Spanish Inquisition sketch – but he clearly had a visual flair which over the next 40 years would see him become one of the most distinctive directors of the late 20th century. ▸

MONTY PYTHON **AND THE HOLY GRAIL**

FILM // 1975, EMI FILMS



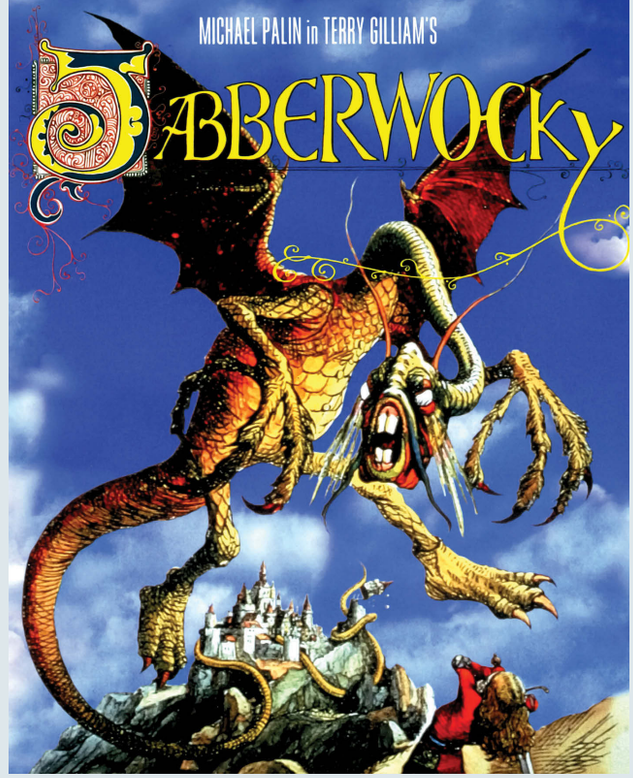
Gilliam's first film as director was not Pythonesque: it was pure Monty Python. You may well remember it as a comedy classic, almost on a par with Life of Brian, but at the time the comic medieval quest fantasy was a tough shoot: "It was just cold and wet and miserable," recalls Eric Idle. And the inexperienced Gilliam was part of the problem.

Terry Jones recognised the issue: "There was a tension with Terry because, as John put it, Terry was used to moving little bits of paper around a table for his animation and there was a feeling that he was treating the actors in the same way," recalls Jones. "He wasn't thinking about how uncomfortable it was to be kneeling in the mud at certain points..."

Gilliam admits: "I had been so long in my room with my pieces of paper that I hadn't adapted to talking to human beings and getting them to do things." There were inevitably tensions between his co-director Terry Jones: "The more we worked together, the clearer it became that we had divergent ideas." There were also inevitably awkward scenes as the two Terrys ordered around their colleagues, who they had previously been on an equal footing with. John Cleese and, more surprisingly, Michael Palin both flew into rages at different times, while Graham Chapman, in the throes of alcoholism, was generally difficult throughout.

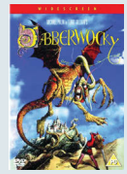
But the film was a success, and no lasting harm was done: Gilliam was to cast almost every Python in his post-Python films, but he was determined to work alone from now on.





JABBERWOCKY

FILM // 1977, COLUMBIA-WARNER



Question: which Terry Gilliam film featured John Le Mesurier, the softly spoken Sergeant Arthur Wilson from Dad's Army?

The answer is Jabberwocky, Gilliam's first solo directorial outing, a fantasy vehicle based on Lewis Carroll's famously "brillig" poem. The film has an odd mishmash of a comedy cast including Warren 'Alf Garnett' Mitchell, Harry H. Corbett (of Steptoe and Son, "probably his own worst enemy" according to Gilliam), Bernard 'Carry On' Bresslaw and Max Wall as King Bruno The Questionable. The film wasn't a success, largely it seems because people were expecting it to be another Monty Python film. Although he was pained by the failure at the time, Gilliam was comforted by the fact he had marked himself out from the other Pythons and by the fact that he had created a film which is the opposite of the 'Hollywood distorting mirror' he had grown up with.

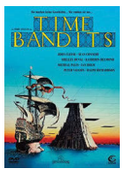
Jabberwocky has certainly developed a cult following in the years since too. Gilliam was on his way. Are there any Pythons in it? Gilliam himself cameos as 'man with rock'. Gilliam's former co-director Terry Jones is (perhaps symbolically) devoured by the beast before the opening titles and Michael Palin stars in the whole thing, and even appears bare buttocked, so yes.



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TIME **BANDITS**

FILM // 1981, AVCO EMBASSY PICTURES



Time Bandits, is probably Gilliam's most fun film. The all too common story of Kevin (Craig Warnock), an ordinary schoolboy who, neglected by his parents, falls in with a group of five time travelling dwarves who are being pursued by the Supreme Being (i.e. God, played by Sir Ralph Richardson) and have invaded his bedroom. The film was a hit, earning eight times its original budget in the US alone.

With appearances by Napoleon (Ian Holm), who is oddly obsessed by seeing "little people fighting each other," mythical minotaur slayer Agamemnon (Sean Connery) and featuring a both hilarious and yet simultaneously chilling turn by David Warner as Evil, a malevolent figure prone to blasting his opponents (sometimes by mistake); the film, though undeniably quite odd, is still very watchable.

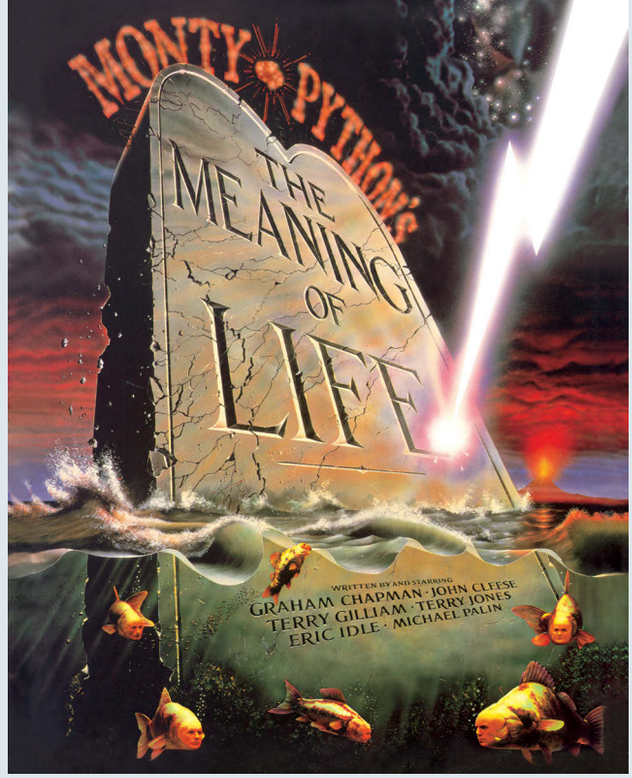
Time Bandits bemused some critics, but was loved by many children, including the author of this feature. Where else, after all, would you see future Game of Thrones actor Peter Vaughan as a cannibalistic ogre plagued by back ache? Or see David Warner battling an army of knights and cowboys? Or see a ship on a giant's head?

Are there any Pythons in it? Some have claimed that the squabbling dwarves are supposed to represent the personalities of the Pythons themselves. This would certainly explain why there are five rather than the more traditional seven. But the real Pythons soon made an appearance too. Michael Palin, who co-wrote the film with Gilliam, appears in a recurring historical role, hopelessly pursuing Shelley Duvall but thwarted either by events (being robbed by the bandits in medieval times or by the sinking of the Titanic in 1912) or by the recurrence of an unspecified personal problem ("I must have fruit!")

John Cleese, meanwhile, plays Robin Hood, albeit in the manor of a patronising member of the royal family ("So you're a robber too are you? Jolly, jolly good") before ultimately concluding as the bandits depart, "what awful people."



Not so merry men: a patronising Robin Hood (John Cleese) meets the Time Bandits: "How long have you been a robber?" "Four foot two."



MONTY PYTHON'S THE MEANING OF LIFE

FILM // 1983, UNIVERSAL PICTURES



Gilliam opted out of directing duties for The Life of Brian, his main contribution being the 'unexpected UFO' sequence. But in 1983 he got back together with the Pythons for one last time. Or rather, he didn't. With the direction of the film already somewhat chaotic, Gilliam was given leeway to utilise his biggest ever budget to date to deliver The Crimson Permanent Assurance, a visually spectacular and impressive film within a film about a stuffy London insurance firm rising up in open rebellion against their new owners. Originally, intended as an interlude with Terry Jones directing the rest, the sequence instead sits rather oddly at the start.

There were concerns. "It was obvious he was having a huge amount of fun with none of the other Pythons in a separate studio set-up," says writer and partner of Graham Chapman, David Sherlock, "it was a wonderful piece of film on its own, but it didn't have much to do with the rest of the movie."

Concerns about budgets and Gilliam's independent behaviour would echo throughout his career. But it is the most memorable bit of the film. Apart from Mr Creosote, obviously.



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GILLIAM VS. WELLES

WHAT DO TERRY GILLIAM AND ORSON WELLES HAVE IN COMMON? QUITE A LOT ACTUALLY...

// In 1957, Welles began production of a film based on Cervantes' epic Don Quixote. He was eventually forced to abandon it due to financing problems. Gilliam abandoned his version over 40 years later, although has made repeated attempts to relaunch the project.

// Citizen Kane, Welles' most acclaimed movie, is now regarded as one of the greatest films ever made, but as with Gilliam's Brazil permanently antagonised the Hollywood establishment.

// Welles' The Magnificent Ambersons (1942) suffered from a similar battle with producers over the final cut to that endured by Gilliam over Brazil.

// Both men are notable for the high number of films they planned which never got made.

// Neither man has ever won an Oscar in the Best Director category. Welles did win a Best Screenplay Oscar for writing Citizen Kane with Herman J. Mankiewicz.

// In one of his final roles Orson Welles provided the voice of Unicron in Transformers: The Movie (1986). Eric Idle took the role of Wreck-Gar. Idle has, of course, worked with Gilliam many times.

// On the other hand: Orson Welles married three times, grew very fat and advertised lager on TV. Terry Gilliam is yet to do any of these things. But there's still time...



Terry's all gold: Jonathan Pryce and Jim Broadbent in Brazil, Gilliam's awe-inspiring vision of a nightmarish future and probably his best film.



BRAZIL

FILM // 1985, 20TH CENTURY FOX



The ad read, "Dear Sid Sheinberg – when are you going to release Brazil? Terry Gilliam"

The battle of Brazil is well documented, but should not detract from the greatness of the film itself. Jonathan Pryce plays a lowly government bureaucrat who dreams of escape from the drudgery of his existence, hopefully aided by Kim Greist. Yet this is no ordinary world. Gilliam creates a dystopian futuristic vision if the world as if viewed from the perspective of the 1940s. Rocked by terrorist attacks and under the tyranny of government, it is hard to believe Gilliam wasn't influenced by Orwell's 1984. But, amazingly, he hadn't read it at the time. Robert De Niro is also memorable in the role of a guerrilla heating engineer.

The problems began when Universal refused to release the film in the US. It had already been released in other territories to great acclaim by 20th Century Fox, but Universal were concerned that the ending of the film was too pessimistic and wanted it cut to appear more optimistic, as if the fantasy Pryce's character enjoys at the end is a genuine happy ending. Battle ensued, leading to Gilliam placing the Variety advert above. Gilliam eventually got his version released. It is now the most acclaimed of any of Gilliam's films.

Are there any Pythons in it? The famously nice Michael Palin is cast totally against type as Jack Lint, a character described as "the embodiment of true evil." Gilliam also cameos.



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THE ADVENTURES OF **BARON MUNCHAUSEN**

FILM // 1988, COLUMBIA PICTURES



"Brazil had come out and done OK. It made decent money – not loads, but enough – and was widely recognised as an achievement of some kind. But this guy who'd made it was clearly trouble and his comeuppance was long overdue... That sense of falling into another story is like a flying dream without the actual flight." Terry Gilliam, Gilliamesque.

Gilliam can sound a bit paranoid sometimes, but here he has a point. The Adventures of Baron Munchausen, the story of the escapades of a famous liar (John Neville), was undeniably a total and complete flop. But while far from perfect, it is not as bad as its reputation suggests.

The influential critic Roger Ebert nailed it saying: "The wit and the spectacle of Baron Munchausen are considerable achievements. I wish only that Gilliam, who co-wrote the screenplay as well as directed, had been able to edit his own inspiration more severely as he went along..."

As Simon Brew has summarised: "For an assortment of reasons, it didn't take long for the film to head over budget, and then the problems really began. At one point a finance company was threatening to sue Gilliam for fraud, with Michael Winner reportedly lined up to take over production. It took some negotiation to get the film finished at Columbia Pictures in the end, and by the time it was ready, studio head David Puttnam had lost his job. Columbia then botched the release, and a film costing nearly $50m made less than $10m at the US box office."

To many Hollywood onlookers it appeared as if Terry Gilliam's own adventures as a filmmaker would soon be over, could he be trusted with a budget again?

Are there any Pythons in it? Eric Idle plays Berthold the fastest runner in the world. Gilliam plays 'Irritating singer inside fish' in an uncredited role.

Robin Williams as the King of the Moon. Although most famous for being a box office disaster, The Adventures of Baron Munchausen is visually often of interest.





THE **FISHER KING**

FILM // 1991, TRISTAR PICTURES



An unusual mix of comedy and tragedy, The Fisher King on paper shouldn't qualify as a fantasy film as all. Focusing on the relationship between Jack (Jeff Bridges), a former shock jock broadcaster on a low after his insensitive on air comments to a depressed caller triggered a gun massacre and Parry (Robin Williams), a homeless man whose life has been ruined by the very same massacre, the film is set in New York. It is in fact the first Gilliam film to be set in his homeland, the first based on a screenplay not written by him and the first not to feature any of the Monty Python cast.

The movie was critically well received and a modest box office hit despite its far from easy subject matter, The Fisher King put Gilliam back on track after the Baron Munchausen debacle. It also certainly qualifies as a fantasy film simply for the beautifully rendered images of the mythical Red Knight who plagues Parry's haunted dreams.

Are there any Pythons in it? No, and you won't find any more in his movies from now on.





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FEAR AND LOATHING **IN LAS VEGAS**

FILM // 1998, UNIVERSAL PICTURES



It should have been a match made in heaven. Adapting Hunter S. Thompson's celebrated drug-addled counterculture classic which had been subtitled 'A Savage Journey To The Heart of the American Dream' had long been deemed an impossible mission by many. Oliver Stone and Martin Scorsese had already abandoned the idea. Unusually, this time it was Terry Gilliam (who had a similar cartooning background to the book's illustrator Briton, Ralph Steadman) who picked up the project. Wisely, he resisted studio pressure to update the setting to the 1990s.

The shoot seems to have been almost as chaotic as the book. Stars Johnny Depp and Benicio Del Toro were both in intense method acting mode, the latter putting on lots of weight for the role and, according to Gilliam's recent accounts, very demanding on the director's attention. More problematic was author Hunter S. Thompson. "I admired him enormously, but he was better appreciated at a distance," concedes Gilliam. Thompson, by then around 60 (he died in 2005), annoyed Gilliam intensely by throwing bread rolls at him during production. The author eventually had to be removed from the set but caused similar chaos at the film's New York premiere by throwing a huge carton of popcorn everywhere.

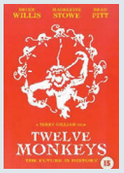
The end results contains enough hallucinatory sequences to count as a 'fantasy' despite being inspired by real events. Like many druggy films it became a cult favourite on DVD.

But it did flop at the box office. Still, it could have been worse. At least it got made...



TWELVE MONKEYS

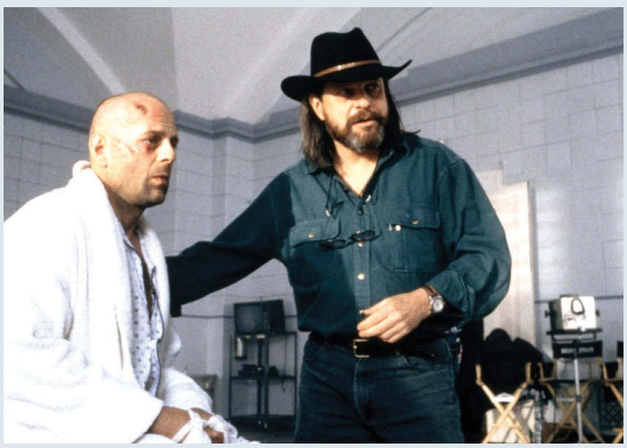
FILM // 1995, UNIVERSAL PICTURES



Probably Terry Gilliam's best film of the 1990s – indeed, perhaps the best science fiction film of the 1990s – Twelve Monkeys is a heady mix of anarchist plots, global apocalypse, time travel and a post-Pulp Fiction on form Bruce Willis, Brad Pitt also impressing with an Oscar-nominated performance.

Based loosely on the 1962 film Le Jetee, the movie begins in what was then the very near future (1996) where the population of the world has been devastated by an apocalyptic plague. Willis plays Cole, a man haunted by strange dreams involving an incident at an airport. He is soon sent sent back in time one year to find a cure, or at least more information on the virus. Instead, he is accidentally sent back to 1990. Then to the trenches of the First World War.

Gilliam allowed filmmakers Fulton and Pepe to film a documentary, The Hamster Factory, about the production, partly to get his side in if something went wrong. Nothing did this time. The same would not be true when the filmmakers returned to document The Man Who Killed Don Quixote five years later...



THE MAN WHO KILLED DON QUIXOTE

FILM // 2000, AMAZON STUDIOS

This is the odd one out on our list. A radical reworking of Miguel Cervantes' epic, probably unfilmable, classic starring Jean Rochefort, Johnny Depp and his then partner Vanessa Paradis. The film was famously never completed after being plagued by a wave of misfortune. As recounted in the documentary Lost in the La Mancha (directed by Keith Fulton and Louis Pepe in 2002 and which is ironically excellent in itself), the film was abandoned after being struck by flash floods, noise pollution from constant NATO flight tests and the illness of the elderly Rochefort.

Gilliam has repeatedly mounted attempts to relaunch the making the film, the latest starring Michael Palin, Adam Driver and Oleg Kurlyenko is currently scheduled to begin filming this year, marking the return of a Python to Gilliam's director's lens.

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HOW NOT TO BE SEEN: GILLIAM UNMADE

From Yahoo Serious's Napoleon to Frank Oz's Muppets' Les Miserables, most directors have a list of unfilmed projects up their sleeves, many of which never get made. Terry Gilliam has more than most. Here are some of the highs and lows...

// THE WATCHMEN

Gilliam came close to adapting Alan Moore's acclaimed classic Cold War comic book epic with Robin Williams, Jamie Lee Curtis, Richard Gere and Arnold Schwarzenegger all rumoured to be interested (the last as Dr Manhattan). Gilliam was unhappy with Sam Hamm's script in which Ozymandias changes history to prevent Dr. Manhattan being created, however, and it never happened. The eventual director Zack Snyder somewhat rudely claimed he had aimed to save the project "from the Terry Gilliams of this world," although later described Gilliam as a genius. Snyder's own version had an ending far closer to the comic but was far from a box office smash.

// HARRY POTTER

A fan of Gilliam's work, JK Rowling reportedly asked Gilliam to direct the first Potter film back in 2000. Much to Gilliam's fury, Warner Bros chose Home Alone's Chris Columbus to do The Philosopher's Stone instead. Gilliam has been scathing about Columbus's two Potter films describing them as "dull" "pedestrian" and "shite," although he has praised some of the later films and now says Potter "was ultimately an assignment I was happy not to get, as by all accounts I've heard from those people who did end up doing them, the studio sat on you so heavily it became a bit of a nightmare."

// GOOD OMENS

A film of Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman's popular 1990 apocalyptic novel has long been a cherished dream of fans, with Gilliam definitely interested in directing and Johnny Depp and Robin Williams supposedly being cast. These early 21st century dreams came to nothing, however. Rumours of a TV version of the book persisted with Terry Jones rather than Gilliam linked to the project, before his sad diagnosis of dementia.

// TIME BANDITS II

Gilliam was keen to make a sequel to his own much loved fantasy but tragedy intervened. David Rappaport who played Randall committed suicide while Jack Purvis (Wally) became a paraplegic after a car accident.

And there's more... Who Framed Roger Rabbit, A Tale of Two Cities, A Scanner Darkly, The Hitchhikers' Guide To The Galaxy, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, The Addams Family: all ultimately ended up being directed by someone else. Feel free to speculate as to whether Gilliam's versions would have been better or not... we will never know.

THE PYTHON IN WINTER...

Gilliam's 21st century films have generally attracted less attention.

TIDELAND (2005) // Starring Jeff Bridges and based on a Mitch Cullen novel is often classed as a sci-fi or fantasy film but was little seen and poorly reviewed despite getting some awards attention.

THE BROTHERS GRIMM (2005) // Stars then rising stars Matt Damon and Heath Ledger as fictionalised versions of the famous fairy tale authors, essentially 19th century con men. Partly due to its popular two leads it did fairly well and is visually quite interesting, though is a bit incoherent and something of a mess. Critics were largely unkind, including the late Roger Ebert who had been nicer about Baron Munchausen, 15 or so years earlier.

THE IMAGINARIUM OF DOCTOR PARNASSUS (2009) // It would be very unfair to reduce the tragic death of Heath Ledger to yet another piece of Terry Gilliam rotten bad luck, and yet the sudden demise of the film's leading man was undeniably a hammer blow to Gilliam. Happily, an ingenious solution was found with Ledger's role being partly recast with Johnny Depp, Colin Farrell and Jude Law as alternative versions of Ledger's character as perceived through the mystical imaginarium of the title. The film was a hit.

THE ZERO THEREOM (2013) // Again, sadly little seen, this centres on Christoph Waltz as a man hell bent on establishing a computer formula which will uncover the meaning of life.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN (IF ANYTHING) TO BE GILLIAMESQUE?

Certainly, there is a distinctive visual style which characterises much of Gilliam's work, perhaps best exemplified by Baron Munchausen. Gilliam's origins in animation are clear, with much of his work resembling animated sequences in a live action setting.

Then there is fantasy and sci-fi. Virtually all of Gilliam's works can be placed in these genres.

Many of his films feature distorted versions of history as in The Brothers Grimm or the weird retro version of the future seen in Brazil. Even before the Time Bandits travelled to 'The Time of Legend' they had, after all, been to a version of ancient Greece where minotaurs apparently really existed.

But what about the downside? While Gilliam has undoubtedly been struck by serious and unavoidable bad luck on occasion – the flash floods on Quixote, the shock death of Heath Ledger – is the high number of chaotic stories lying behind the creation or non-creation of so many of his films, in some measure down to him?

The answer must be, to some extent, yes. Baron Munchausen did flop after all because it wasn't given a proper release. But this was after Gilliam had gone, by his own admission, significantly over budget, a genuine risk with the sweeping epic type films Gilliam used to make. Gilliam had also undeniably already antagonised producers with his independent minded determination not to compromise his vision.

Originality. Imagination. A refusal to compromise. Gilliam will be 76 as of 22 November and it is now clearer than ever that these are the qualities that have made him a great fantasy director. They are the qualities that have made him and his films so completely different. **GM**

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CONDORMAN
// 1981

directed by
CHARLES JARROTT

featuring
MICHAEL CRAWFORD // **WOODROW 'WOODY' WILKINS**
OLIVER REED // **KROKOV**
BARBARA CARRERA // **NATALIA RAMBOVA**

You may think that comic book cinematic universes are a modern invention, but oh no. Back in 1981 Walt Disney was combining the world of comics and movies together, but neither the critics of the day or the audiences really applauded their efforts.

The set-up sounds about right: comic book creator Woodrow Wilkins has created a superhero called Condorman and the kids love it. In research for the comics he creates himself a Condorman suit, and tests it out by leaping off the Eiffel Tower. One crash landing later, a CIA friend of his asks Woody to do a paper swap for him, which results in a meeting with a beautiful Russian woman. Realising that she is in fact a Soviet KGB agent and using the codename 'Condorman', Woody encourages the woman to defect.

The CIA ask Woody to help the agent defect to the West, and he agrees only if they create the gadgets of Condorman from his comic book designs. Of course, when you realise that Condorman is played by Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em's Michael Crawford doing his best James Bond impression, all superhero mystique goes out of the window. The movie ends up being a madcap chase around Europe, with some beautiful scenery to see along the way, but ultimately more of a farce, with cables holding Condorman up very visible on screen. Not quite the CGI-laden superhero movies we know today. But then, perhaps that's not a bad thing?



"HAVE YOU SEEN THIS REPORT ON THIS CONDORMAN? ON THIS MAN WILKINS? HE IS AN AMATEUR, DO YOU HEAR? HE IS NOT AN AGENT OF THE CIA! HE IS A WRITER OF COMIC BOOKS!"

KROKOV, PLAYED BY OLIVER REED

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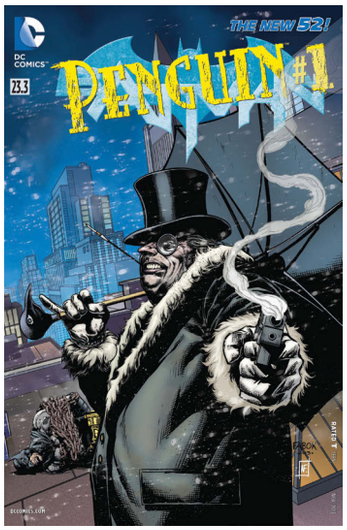
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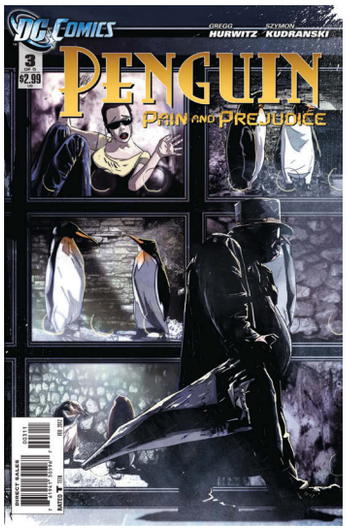
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A TINY TERROR, WHAT?

REAL NAME OSWALD CHESTERFIELD COBBLEPOT // **FIRST APPEARANCE** DETECTIVE COMICS #58 (DECEMBER 1941)





Obviously Oswald Cobblepot was never going to strike fear into his enemies, so he wisely changed it to The Penguin. Then, the purple top hat and mask from the 1960's TV series wasn't that menacing either!

©DC COMICS / ©20TH CENTURY FOX TELEVISION / ©WARNER BROS

THE PENGUIN

MEET GOTHAM'S PORTLY, UMBRELLA WIELDING CRIME BOSS, THE PENGUIN.

Words: SEBASTIAN WILLIAMSON



DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS
His short stature, skills in bare-knuckle boxing and judo, a genius intellect and a rather nifty collection of umbrellas that can transform into killer weapons such as machine guns, swords, flamethrowers and, um, lasers.

WHERE IS HE NOW?
If you want to see what The Penguin's up to then we suggest grabbing a season pass for Telltale's Batman game, where he makes an appearance in a pretty major role.

Don't let the Penguin's size fool you. This pint-sized crook has terrorized Gotham City for decades on the printed page, as well as transitioning to film, TV and videogames, including an appearance in the recently released Batman game from masterful storytellers Telltale Games.

Oswald Chesterfield Cobblepot – or The Penguin to his crooked chums – was cooked up by Batman creator Bob Kane and scribe Bill Finger, making his first appearance in the DC world way back in the 1941 December issue of Detective Comics.

Cobblepot's backstory is somewhat of a tragic one. He came from a reasonably wealthy middle class background, but was considered so ugly by his own father he was dropped on his head the day he was born and forced to sleep at the end of his parents' bed like a dog, while his father attempted to knock his mother up in an attempt to conceive a normal looking child.

To make matters worse, Cobblepot was tortured at school by his nasty classmates who nicknamed him The Penguin – teasing him about his pointy nose and height, and hanging the poor sod from the monkey bars so that he'd look like a bird. It's no wonder he turned to a life of crime, taking the money he inherited from his parents and building the Iceberg Lounge, a gargantuan social club used as a front for his numerous criminal enterprises, including illegal boxing and arms dealing.

The character has been brought to life by a number of actors over the years, each time with differing results and approaches. First up was Burgess Meredith, who portrayed The Penguin in the campy sixties Batman TV show, before handing over the role to Danny DeVito in Tim Burton's Batman Returns.

DeVito's Penguin was pretty much the polar opposite of Meredith's take, with the actor gunning for a more gross out and sinister approach. Recently Robin Lord Taylor has taken on the mantle, bringing to life a much younger, although equally psychotic version of the character in Gotham. In a show full of misfires and substandard villains he's arguably the best thing going for it, so here's hoping he sticks around to the end.

However, the most intriguing thing about The Penguin is that in a world of insane villains, he's actually the only one in control of his actions, which makes him all the more dangerous to both Batman and the good people of Gotham. Frankly, we love him. He's the best villain this side of The Joker, so here's hoping we'll be seeing more of the tiny terror in the near future. **GM**



“MY DEAR PENGUINS, WE STAND ON A GREAT THRESHOLD! IT’S OKAY TO BE SCARED; MANY OF YOU WON’T BE COMING BACK. THANKS TO BATMAN, THE TIME HAS COME TO PUNISH ALL GOD’S CHILDREN!”

THE PENGUIN



COSPLAYER // VAN WOLF

Wayne Vanic Jones is a 34 year old support worker from South Wales. He has been cosplaying for over ten years under the name Van Wolf and founded the cosplay group Heroes of Geek back in 2012 with best friend Shane Emanuel (Hane the Dragon). Now the group has eight members and have appeared as guests at over 15 events this year alone. The group has been going from strength to strength and are looking forward to another exciting year ahead. Van Wolf and fellow member Little Vamp were guests at the MCM Expo in October.

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THIS IS YOUR RECEIPT FOR THE LATEST GEEKY COLLECTABLES... AND THIS IS MY RECEIPT FOR YOUR RECEIPT.



Indiana Jones Temple of Doom Sixth Scale Figure

$230 (£151) // THINKGEEK.COM

Action figures have come a long way from the 1980's days of dodgy joints and falling over plastic characters that looked nothing like your hero actors. This new Indiana Jones figure by Sideshow Collectibles stands a whopping foot tall and is incredibly detailed with lots of accessories so you can recreate your favourite scene from the Indy movies. It comes with 11 interchangeable hands – 11! There's a pair of fists, a hand for a machete, hand for a whip, open hands and hands with a left trigger finger to attach to the included pistol. There's even a set of glow-in-the-dark Sankara stones to complete the effect.







Star Wars Espresso Mug Set

£17 // DISNEYSTORE.CO.UK

How do you like your coffee? On the Dark Side of course! These espresso mugs from Underground Toys are very simple and neat, but will add an extra dimension to your morning espresso kick. They're made from porcelain, so are the real deal, and feature Boba Fett, Darth Vader, Emperor Palpatine and a Stormtrooper. You can pick them up at the Disney Store, or try your local Debenhams.



Knight Rider K.I.T.T. USB Car Charger

£25 // THINKGEEK.COM

Well typical, we just install the ThinkGeek Back to the Future USB Flux Capacitor in the Geeky Monkeymobile, and now the Knight Rider K.I.T.T. USB charger has come along. Both devices are brilliant, perfectly recreating the look, feel and in this case sounds of the originals. OK, underneath it all this is just a USB charger for all your devices on the move, but press the button and it talks to you!



Rogue One: A Star Wars Story Pop! Vinyl K-2SO

£10 // FORBIDDENPLANET.CO.UK

You won't be able to move this Christmas for Rogue One merchandise, and of course that means an entirely new range of Funko Pop! Vinyl figures. C-3PO has a rival for the droid sidekick cup with K-2SO making its first appearance in the new movie as the heroes try to steal the plans for the Death Star. This funky little figure stands around 9cm tall, so will fit neatly on your desk. Great stuff!



Back To The Future Part II Magnetic Floating DeLorean

$205 (£135) // KIDS-LOGIC.COM

The clever people at Kids Logic are the masters of collectables that levitate, having previously created a floating Doraemon! Their latest invention is a floating DeLorean time machine straight out of Back To The Future II. Officially licensed by Universal Studios, every detail of the iconic car has been recreated here, with 10 LED light-up features, opening doors and moving wheels that can be swapped between flying and driving modes. Through some kind of futuristic science they have managed to get this DeLorean floating on its base, bobbing around as it hovers ready to take off to 88mph. Incredible. We take our hats off to you Kids Logic, please take our money now!



Star Trek: The Original Series Bluetooth Communicator

$150 (£99) // THINKGEEK.COM

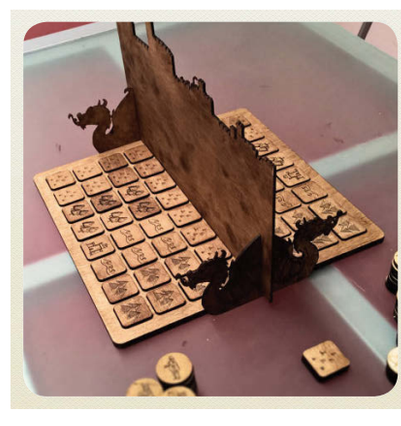
It's something we've all dreamt about while watching Star Trek – how cool would it be to have one of those Communicators for real? Well they've only gone and done it! Using 3D scans of the actual prop used in the original Star Trek TV series, this Bluetooth device will pair with any smartphone to give you the full Star Trek experience. So you can now answer your calls with a flick of the wrist just like Kirk or Spock!



Star Wars R2-D2 Oven Gloves

£14 // AMAZON.CO.UK

If you want to deck out your kitchen as some kind of shrine to Star Wars, then Underground Toys has been working closely with the LucasFilm and Disney boffins to create the ultimate homewares range for this Christmas. These R2-D2 oven gloves are perfectly detailed with all the knobs and buttons from the resourceful little droid. Grab a pair for your next roast dinner from Amazon or Debenhams!



Cyvasse: Game of Thrones Board Game

£100 // BRISTOLDESIGNFORGE.CO.UK

If you're a real fan of Game of Thrones you will recognise this board game. It's called Cyvasse and is mentioned in George R. R. Martin's A Feast For Crows novel. Using rules gathered from fans and the few scraps of information available in the books, laser cutting company Bristol Design Forge has recreated the game in beautiful wood with 46 player pieces and 66 land tiles, all hand-finished and waxed.



BECAUSE JAPAN

Words: JONATHAN CLEMENTS

Jonathan is the author of Anime: A History and Modern Japan: All That Matters

The Have-a-Go Hero

THE FIRST JAPANESE ANIMATOR TO COMPETE AT THE LONDON FILM FESTIVAL



It's a familiar set-up for fans of anime director Makoto Shinkai. In his latest, Your Name, a boy and a girl have never met, but are still intimately connected by a mysterious switching of their personalities.

Shinkai often writes about distance – sometimes the micro-gestures that define how two people feel about each other when they are sitting on a bench; sometimes the time-lag between the sending of a phone message and its reception. But that's not what made Makoto Shinkai famous. He became the poster boy for an entire generation of animation fans because his debut video release, Voices From A Distant Star, was made single-handed.

Or was it? Although he used off-the-shelf software, it helped that he could liberate the most expensive pro tools from his day-job at a computer games company. And by the time the public saw it, it had been buffed up with an injection of cash and manpower from Shinkai's new patrons. But print the legend: Voices was an anime hit, made by a computer nerd in his living room!

Shinkai bypassed the usual route to an animation career, but that didn't come without a price. He was propelled into movies, even though he had no apprenticeship in running a studio, and no experience in writing long. Hopeful hype rashly proclaimed him as the next Miyazaki, a ludicrous assertion to make about a 31-year-old first-time feature director. His first full-length feature, The Place Promised in Our Early Days, was unremarkable, leading him to drift back into shorts amid whispers that he might have peaked too early. His next work, 5cm Per Second was a far more accomplished, emotionally compelling work, but comprised three linked shorts that fell seven tantalising minutes short of feature length.

Forget the Miyazaki comparison. Shinkai has much more in common with Charlotte Church (no, bear with me!), an undeniable talent, successful at a perilously young age, and forced to learn the ropes of a more mature career path while trapped in the public eye. Shinkai has literally not had the time to make the mistakes and discover the skills that

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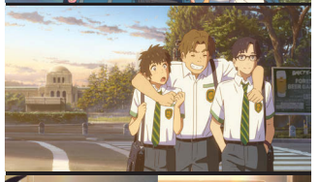


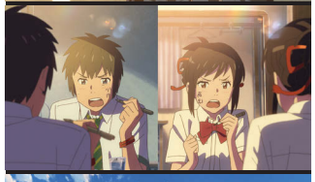






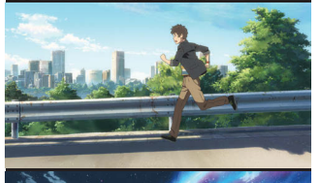






















other animators hone over a decade. His particular style is often born from the things he never got around to learning, like photo-real backgrounds suffused with wondrous sunsets and dappled lighting effects to obscure the fact they've been ripped off from real photos.

In the first flush of his success in 2008 he ducked out of the industry for several months and became an English student in London. His idle days spent mooching around the British Museum, he said, helped inspire his second feature Journey to Agartha. But Journey to Agartha was something of a flop – a bloated, half-hearted fantasy epic that evoked a meeting of accountants trying desperately to reverse-engineer the appeal of the retiring Hayao Miyazaki.

Shinkai's follow-up was a bold return to his fannish roots, the 40-minute Garden of Words, about a student and a teacher who play truant in a Tokyo park. Garden of Words was a triumph – a thoughtful, bittersweet platonic romance, distributed in a bespoke, small-cinema format in which, more often than not, the director himself was in attendance, ready to sell you a signed DVD on your way out. At the time of its release, as its box office swiftly climbed, he gingerly told me that it was liable to steer his future productions. Money-men were sure to determine that his next movie should be another romance, not sci-fi. The fantasy elements in Your Name are liable to have been smuggled in by the back door.

Now in his forties, Shinkai continues to live in the glare of publicity, now as the first Japanese animator to be in competition at the London Film Festival. But he also has something of the geek made good about him, barricading himself in his hotel room to complete the next instalment of the novelisation of his own movie, and using his clout as a film maker to fulfil the occasional nerdy dream. I asked him why he had cast Fumi Hirano, the actress who played devil-girl Lum in Urusei Yatsura, as the teacher in Garden of Words.

"Well," he blushed. "I'd always fancied her..." **GM**

Your Name opens throughout the UK on 24 November.

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THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Is it really possible to make an animated film in your lounge? The plummeting cost of software means that RETAS Pro, the anime industry standard, has dropped from £4400 in 1998 to just £240 today for a package that can churn out an entire TV show. Softimage Toonz, used by the famous Studio Ghibli, has now gone open-source. But although you can buy the software, you can't buy talent or time...

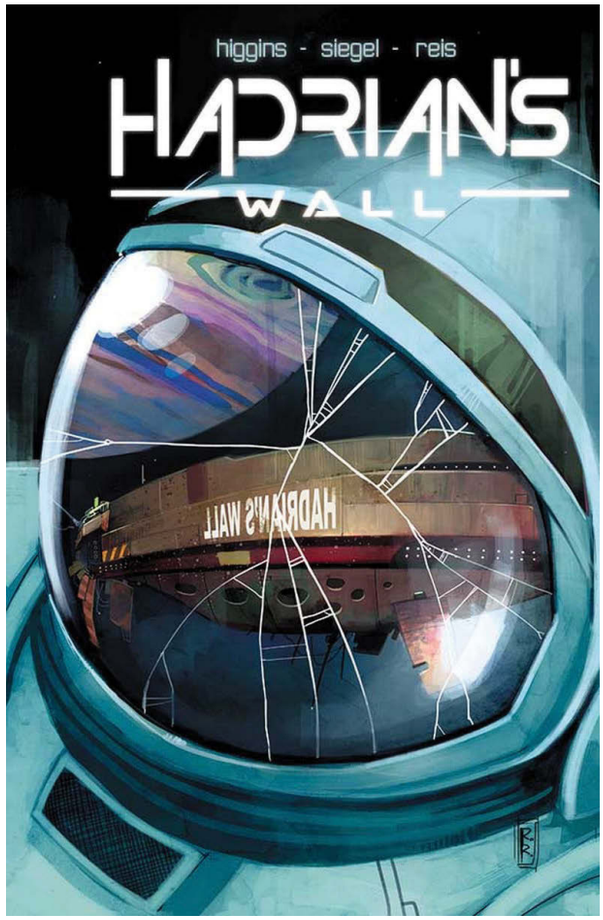


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DESPITE THE CHILLING ONSET OF AUTUMN, THE VOLUME OF FUNNY-BOOKS LANDING ON SHELVES CONTINUES TO MAKE TRIPS TO THE COMIC STORE, A DIZZYING EXPERIENCE...

Words: MICHAEL CAMPBELL

Michael has written about wrestling, movies, tattoos and comics for years. All occasionally involve men in trunks and occupy far too much of his time.

Marvel commenced their nauseating over-saturation of the Deadpool market in earnest through October with the Back in Black limited series joining the ranks alongside Mercs for Money and his ongoing (not to mention recent minis, plus his role within The Avengers). Full of cute ideas, they're the sort of amusing asides that would work well within arcs of a truly bonkers main title, but instead appear to be cash grabs aimed at anyone remotely intrigued by the colourful, foul-mouthed merc. Still, Back in Black combines the man in red and black with Venom's alien symbiote, and fans of Cullen Bunn's scripting will enjoy what is dished out here.

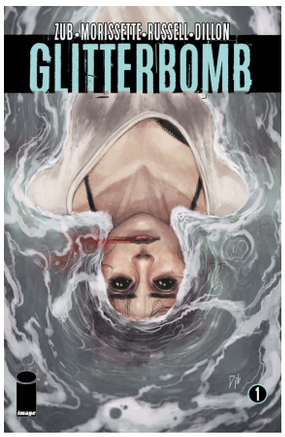
Image continued their dizzying onslaught of new releases with the exceptional Hadrian's Wall #1. A space-bound neo-noir tale of murder, this is a dazzling new take on the mystery genre. It may initially appear to be nothing more than a collection of (admittedly lofty) influences, but this creative team really know what they're doing. In particular, Rod Reis' artwork is breathtaking stuff. Like many first issues of the modern climate, the story starts rather slowly, hinting at undercurrents and alluding to clues while introducing key players. In this case, the steady progression certainly fits the tone and establishes this as a title likely to become increasingly gripping every issue.

Zachary Kaplan's Eclipse meanwhile, threatens to erm... overshadow the other titles from the publisher in the coming months. A high concept science fiction, his story surrounds a society in which the sun has become a deadly entity to humans, with the rays now being harnessed as a weapon by a killer with an agenda. Although the first issue hardly fires on all cylinders, it certainly presents a compelling mash-up of genre tropes that may well prove to be a thrilling ride.

Often forgotten due to an erratic shipping schedule, is Afterlife with Archie. Like its sister book Sabrina, it lands with a thud every so often. It's usually worth the wait though, as Archie Comics continually surprise with their barmy amalgamation of familiar characters and unexpectedly sinister horror. Their 'Betty RIP' story may well have been better served on a more punctual basis, but it would be wrong to quibble when the result is issues as satisfying as #10. A bumper-sized book, this is actually an 'interlude' from the main story featuring Josie and The Pussycats, and it's a superb re-imagining that opens doors for future tie-ins.

Another source who've been notoriously infrequent, Black Mask Comics, have finally got The Forevers into stores. It's worth the wait too. There's a potential for real darkness in the book's struggle between a group of friends who once made a magical pact, gained powers, became famous, and now find themselves at odds with one another. Learning through a death that said person's abilities become distributed throughout the remaining members, makes for an exciting premise. It'll be intriguing to see if the creative team can live up to that promise.

What makes this book appealing is that it continues the publisher's drive towards wider genres and away from the realism that has defined several of their biggest hits. Different is good in the case of a comic that feels like an early Nineties





[COMIC OF THE MONTH]

Glitterbomb

// STORY, JIM ZUB // ART, DJIBRIL MORISSETTE-PHAN, K. MICHAEL RUSSELL // PUBLISHER, IMAGE COMICS

Intense and dabbling in the seedy landscape that is Hollywood, Glitterbomb centres around ageing actress Farrah Durante. Well, she's at least ageing by Hollywood standards. Her journey and 'failures' result in a very human source of horror that is both terrifying, and pretty damn relevant to today's alarming fetishism of youth. This is bleak and and unpleasant stuff, expertly crafted by writer Jim Zub. Fans of neo-horror films such as Nicholas Winding Refn's Neon Demon will lap this title up.

DC'S VERTIGO IMPRINT RE-ENTERED THE FANTASY REALM WITH THEIR LATEST TIE-IN TO THE FABLES LANDSCAPE, EVERAFTER

Vertigo book, particular in regards to Eric Pfeiffer's sometimes stunning art. Initially dialogue heavy, the comic doesn't suffer thanks to Pfeiffer's ability to capture photo-realistic expressions and establish unique angles, before really coming alive with his beautiful wider shots.

Speaking of which, DC's Vertigo imprint re-entered the fantasy realm with their latest tie-in to the Fables landscape, Everafter. This one is unique in the sense that it provides an unusual combination of espionage and fantasy, which may well prevent it from being to all tastes. Fables fans, though, should be more than than impressed by this creative effort.

Finally, DC at last supplied the long-awaited Cyborg series, which has just about managed to avoid being a disappointment thus far. The Rebirth special offered nothing new, despite being fairly entertaining. Will Conrad's art is a positive though, as is the introduction of a new opponent for the titular character, as the team look to strengthen a weak supporting cast. This one has a long way to go to live up to explications ahead of Victor Stone's role within the Justice League movies. **GM**

IN THE ART SEAT

SHERARD JACKSON, ARTIST, LETTERER, COLORIST, WRITER

[GALAXYS FOR HIRE, SEMANTIC LACE, EMPTY ZONE]



When did your interest in comics begin? I've always wanted to draw, at least since I was five or six. I loved animation. At that age I knew I wanted to do that, even when I didn't really know how 'that' was done. All I knew was I still enjoyed cartoons and comics long after the other kids around me were getting into other things. I remember picking up an issue of Transformers – the original Marvel Comics run. It was #2. Seeing that cover, the art, reading the story, that inspired me to draw and want to tell stories. So, mostly sci-fi and robots had the biggest impact on me when I pursued comics as a career.

How did you break into the industry? My friends and I self published. We put out our anthology, Section 8, back in the 90s. We ran it for a year and got a good amount of attention from it. My buddy and company lead, Jason Shawn Alexander, went on to have a very successful comics and fine art career. I started doing more freelance work for comics and role-playing games. Around 2000 Arrow Comics picked up the pitch for my creator owned series, Semantic Lace. A few years later, Image and Devil's Due finished off the series in digest-sized graphic novel format. This was when I started working at Antarctic Press. A few years, and some wonderful animation and movies projects in-between then and now, I'm here: full-time freelance artist.

Can you describe for us what a typical working day is like for you? My workday varies. Mostly I plan out what needs to get done for the day. If I'm working on my current book, Galaxys for Hire, I'll rough out a a good portion of the pages. I'll ink and add effects to one or two pages at the same time. Later in the week, I'll finish up any freelance projects I'm working on.

Having enjoyed different roles, what part of the work do you feel you've improved most on? General work flow. I started off as an artist, doing full chores on my work. I'd do rough pencils, clean it up in inks, and scan it all in for the toning/coloring/lettering part. Each part took lots of hours. I work digitally now, so everything is one complete process for me. I've gotten a little better on coloring and lettering. Lettering is often overlooked. It shouldn't be... great letting is about making the story presentable.

Can you describe what makes 'good' coloring? Good coloring is about emphasis. It's about what you need the reader to focus on in that page. A great colorist can set the proper mood for the story. Bad coloring is when you render everything with the same level of detail. When nothing sticks out, and the colors are just there to fill up space.

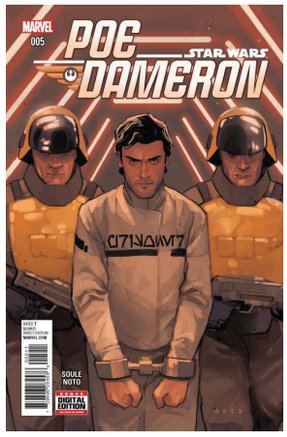
Which creators have you worked with that you've learned from most? My best friend and old studio mate Jason Shawn Alexander. I look at his work and I remember what it was that made me love comics as a storytelling medium. My Antarctic Press studio mates really taught me how to treat comics as a serious job/career instead of a hobby. Rod Espinosa showed me how to make a better story and to always draw towards something. Brian Denham inspired me to go full digital. Joe Wight, David Hutchison are amazing talents and great storytellers. I've worked with a lot of wonderful artists and I've left so many names off the list here. I've tried to take some inspiration from everyone.

COMIC CRITIQUE

ONCE AGAIN, GEEKY MONKEY DELVES INTO THE CROWDED RACKS OF STORES TO FOCUS ON SEVERAL CHOICE COMICS READY TO EMPTY YOUR BANK ACCOUNT...

Star Wars: Poe Dameron #1-6

STORY, CHARLES SOULE // ART, PHIL NOTO // PUBLISHER, MARVEL COMICS



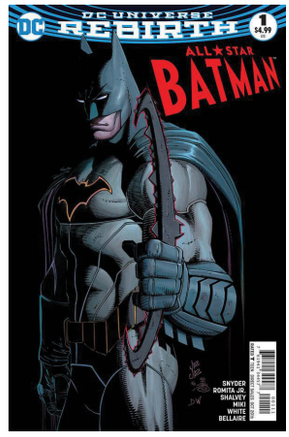


Charles Soule is a very fine writer indeed, and has certainly produced good work for Marvel in recent times, but there's undoubtedly something lacking in his take on Poe Dameron. It just doesn't feel very significant, and restricted somewhat as a prequel to The Force Awakens. Likewise, there's a lot to like about Noto's art in most circumstances, but it doesn't fit well with this book at all.

★★☆☆☆

All Star Batman #1-2

STORY, SCOTT SNYDER // ART, DECLAN SHALVEY, JOHN ROMITA JR // PUBLISHER, DC COMICS





John Romita Jr. is a Marmite artist, which is unfortunate because he remains one of the finest storytellers in the industry. Shalvey meanwhile, produced some stunning art for Warren Ellis' Injection last year, and that trend continues with his portion of this new Bat-book. High concept collides with Snyder's grasp of the iconic figures here for a really enticing start. This is glorious stuff.

★★★★☆

Doctor Who: Third Doctor #1

STORY, PAUL CORNELL // ART, CHRISTOPHER JONES // PUBLISHER, TITAN COMICS



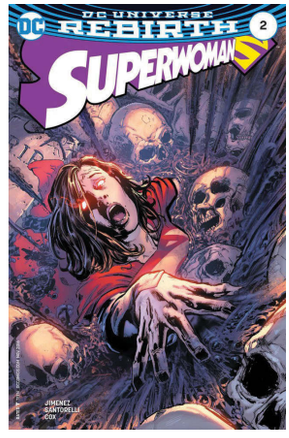


Doctor Who titles can be a daunting prospect for those who have only given the TV series a cursory viewing. Thankfully, writer Paul Cornell penned the 2015 success Four Doctors, and his knack for scripting believable characters and giving them genuine voices remains. Still, we'd prefer to see a little more detail in the artwork beyond the respectable likenesses on show.

★★★☆☆

Superwoman #1-2

STORY, PHIL JIMENEZ // ART, PHIL JIMENEZ, MATT SANTORELLI // PUBLISHER, DC COMICS





Superwoman continues the rewarding experience of Superman books since Rebirth thanks to the exceptional work of Phil Jimenez. He doesn't just have a great handle on central character, Lana Lang, but also on Metropolis as a whole, and the entire concept of providing a story within The Man of Steel's world, without relying on the big guy.

★★★★☆







WIN! RED DWARF XI T-SHIRTS, HOODIES, POSTERS & BADGES!

COMPETITION TIME!





WITH RED DWARF XI SHOWING NOW ON DAVE AND UKTV PLAY, IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE THE BOYS FROM THE DWARF RETURNING WITH OFFICIAL MERCHANDISE!

There's a fantastic selection of official Red Dwarf merchandise available from the Red Dwarf store, created by Matrix. T-shirts that are unique to this brilliant eleventh series like the 'Lady Be Good Club' or '18 of 241' quote, then iconic T-shirts and hoodies with Jupiter Mining Corporation and Red Dwarf XI logos, baseball caps, mugs, bags, posters, badges and even lanyards so you can become one of the crew!

We've been given a selection of Medium T-shirts, Medium hoodies and other cool merchandise to give away to lucky Geeky Monkey readers. To win something...

A. Facebook: Visit our Facebook page at **facebook.com/geekymonkeymag** then Like, Share and Comment on the competition post before emailing us the answer to the Red Dwarf question.

OR

B. Twitter: Go to **twitter.com/thegeekymonkey**, Like and Retweet the competition Tweet then answer the question.

We'll select the winners at random on 25 November.

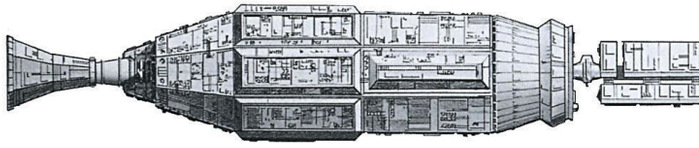
See the full range at... **shop.reddwarf.co.uk**

TERMS & CONDITIONS: This competition is open to readers of Geeky Monkey residing in the UK and Ireland. Employees of Uncooked Media Ltd and their families are not eligible to enter. The competition closes at 23:59 on 24 November, entries received after that time will not be counted. Winners will be selected at random on 25 November and contacted via email. Prizes will be delivered to mainland UK and Ireland addresses only, and Uncooked Media Ltd reserves the right to withdraw one or all prizes without notification. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

©UKTV

MEGA MACHINE

DISCOVERY ONE



THE FIRST HUMAN SHIP TO TRAVEL TO THE MOONS OF JUPITER, THE DISCOVERY FROM 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY IS A CLASSIC THAT STILL LOOKS GREAT AFTER FIFTY YEARS

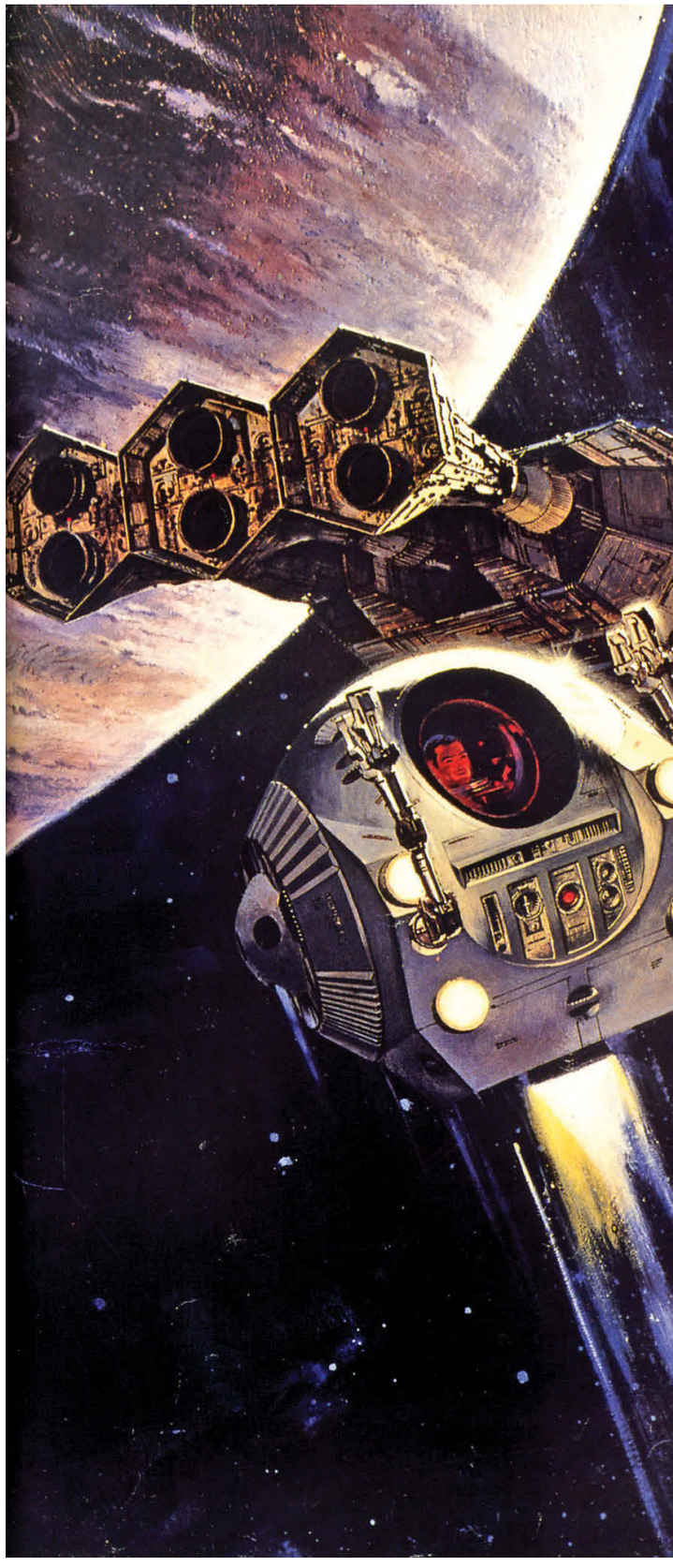
When Stanley Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke got together in the Spring of 1964 to begin work on the "proverbial good science-fiction movie," they were setting out to create a future world that few at the time could have imagined. It was a time of great progress in space exploration; it was only three years since Yuri Gagarin became the first man in space, and five years before Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin would become the first men to set foot on the Moon. Science fiction films of the late 1950s and early 60s were less concerned with realism and more with the whoosh-bang adventure of invading aliens and berserk robots. Until 2001: A Space Odyssey came along, space ships in science fiction films had mostly been either giant rockets or flying saucers, but Kubrick and Clarke wanted their space technology to look realistic, and no part of that was more important than the ship that would take Dave Bowman on his epic journey to the moons of Jupiter and beyond: the XD-1 Discovery One.

To help them get the right look for the Discovery, at Clarke's suggestion Kubrick hired scientist Frederick Ordway and artist Harry Lange, who had worked at NASA developing advanced space vehicle concepts. These two worked with production designers Anthony Masters and Ernest Archer, and art director John Hoesli, to realise the designs of the film's models and sets, and it's a testament to their skill and vision that the technology shown in the film still doesn't look dated nearly half a century later.

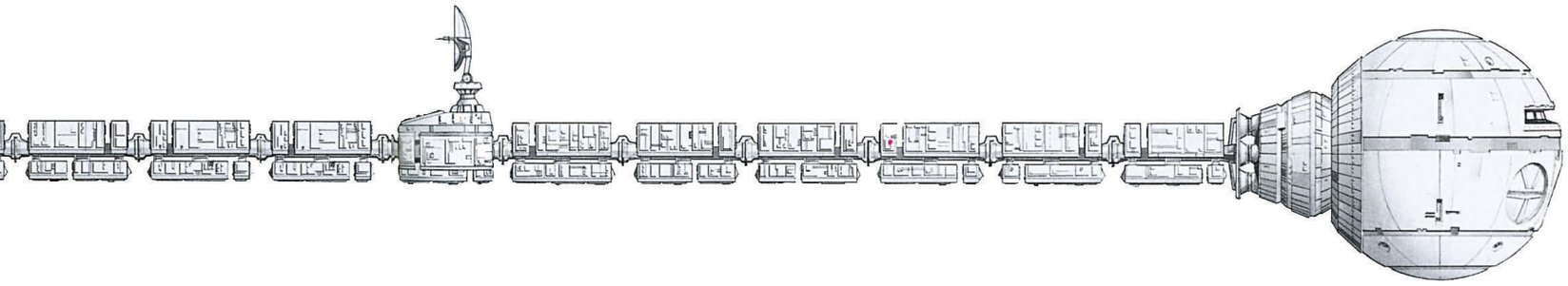
One question that needed to be answered early on was how the Discovery would be powered. Obviously rockets were out; they wanted to show a future propulsion system that could feasibly take a large manned space ship all the way to Jupiter. After briefly considering a nuclear pulse drive – literally powering the ship with nuclear explosions – they settled on a nuclear-powered plasma drive, a system which NASA has actually considered for deep space missions. This led to one of the few concessions to aesthetics over realism. In reality the Discovery's reactor would have needed large cooling fins to radiate away waste heat, but as Clarke says in his 1970 book on the making of the film The Lost Worlds of 2001, "Our audiences already had enough to puzzle about; we didn't want them to spend half the picture wondering why spaceships should have wings. So the radiators came off."

Another feature of the ship that was revolutionary was the spinning crew carousel, intended to produce the sensation of gravity. Other science fiction films and shows such as the original series of Star Trek – also made in the mid-60s - had got around this by hand-waving 'artificial gravity', but again Kubrick and Clarke wanted their ship to be realistic, so a gigantic 30-ton, 12m diameter spinning 'ferris wheel' set was constructed at Shepperton Studios to film the scenes in which astronauts Bowman and Poole run around the inside of the carousel.

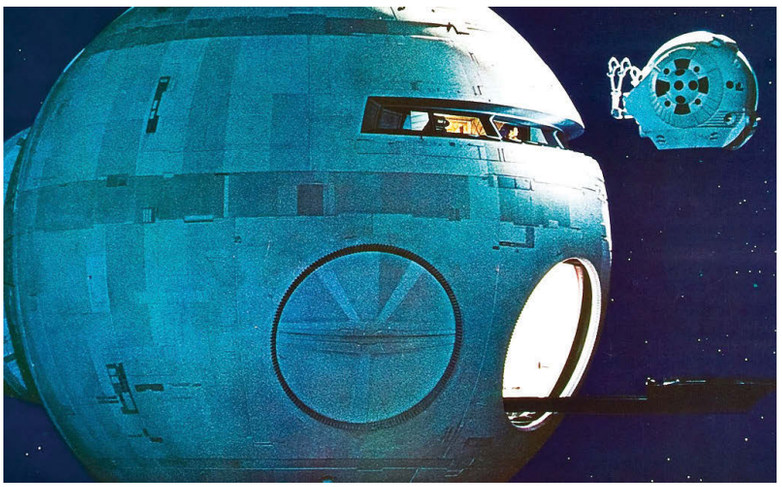
And then of course there's the film's only real antagonist – Hal, or the HAL 9000 computer, to give him his full name. Hal was the brain and nervous system of the Discovery, an artificial intelligence imagined in a decade when computers still ran on punched cards and reel-to-reel tapes, another aspect of the film that was decades ahead of its time. Hal is so iconic that even Siri pays tribute to him. All together now: "Open the pod bay doors, Hal." "I'm sorry Dave..." **GM**

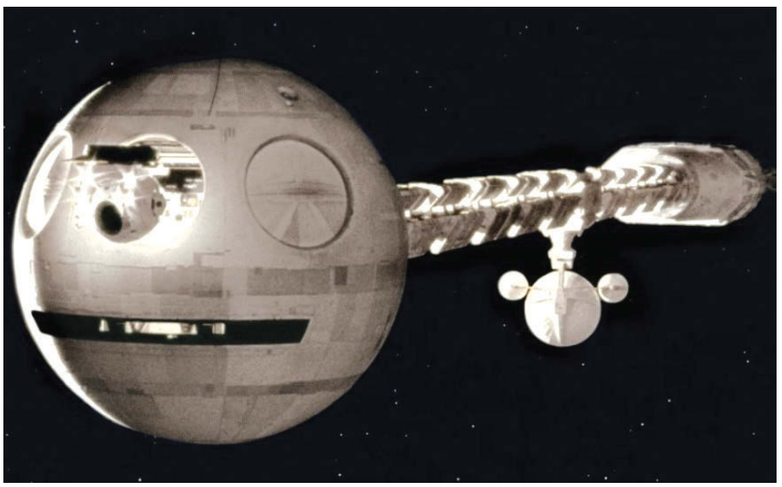


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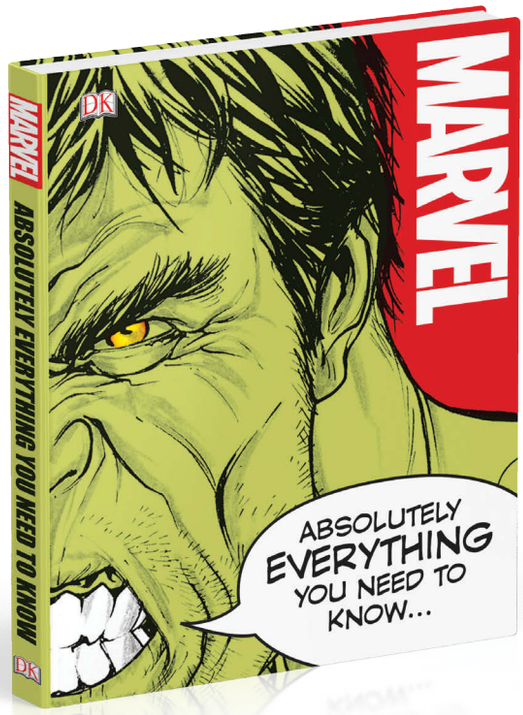




“ONE QUESTION THAT NEEDED TO BE ANSWERED EARLY ON WAS HOW THE DISCOVERY WOULD BE POWERED”

LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT THING...

Hard facts about the Discovery are surprisingly hard to pin down. In the novel version of 2001: A Space Odyssey it is described as being 460ft (140m) long, but in the sequel film 2010 it is stated as being 250ft (76m) long. However according to Wikipedia it is 140.1m long, 16.7m wide, weighs 5,440 tonnes and is driven by nuclear-powered magnotoplasmadynamic thrusters using hydrogen as propellant. It has a crew of five humans plus the HAL 9000, with three of the crew travelling to Jupiter in hibernation, although of course not all of them make it...



MARVEL

ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW

WRITERS, ADAM BRAY, JOHN SAZAKLIS, LORRAINE CINK, SVEN WILSON // PUBLISHER, DK // PRICE, £17.99

The first Marvel comic was published 77 years ago this month, in October 1939. It starred the android Super Hero The Human Torch and was titled Marvel Comics #1, a comic from publisher Timely Comics. From that single issue grew a comic book giant, employing the world's best comic book writers and artists, with Super Hero legend Stan Lee being with the company from the very start when he was employed as an assistant at age 17.

The new *Marvel Absolutely Everything You Need To Know* book from DK is a celebration of everything Marvel, including action packed pages on many of Stan Lee's iconic creations and fun facts that you won't have read before. For example, did you know that Black Panther gains many of his powers from the juice of a heart-shaped herb? Anyone not worthy enough will die if they try to eat it.

Over in the Iron Man pages there's a breakdown of the five different Iron Man suits, our personal favourite being the 'Space Armour MK III' that has back-mounted rocket thrusters and an onboard A.I. system called P.E.P.P.E.R.

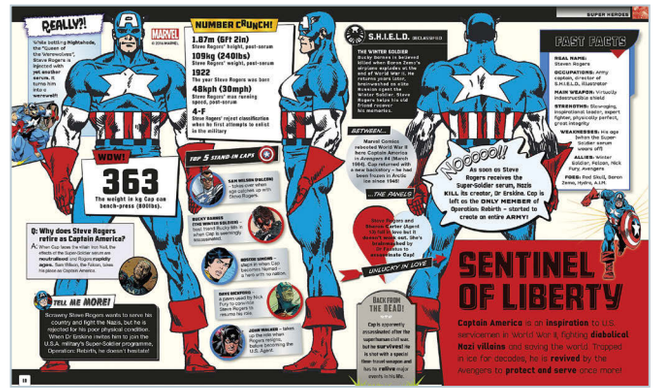
Of course, Stan Lee didn't come up with every Marvel character. There are pages in the book on Captain America, a creation of cartoonists Joe Simon and Jack Kirby in 1941. Did you know that when Steve Rogers was injected with another serum, this time it turned him into a werewolf? You will if you pick up this book!

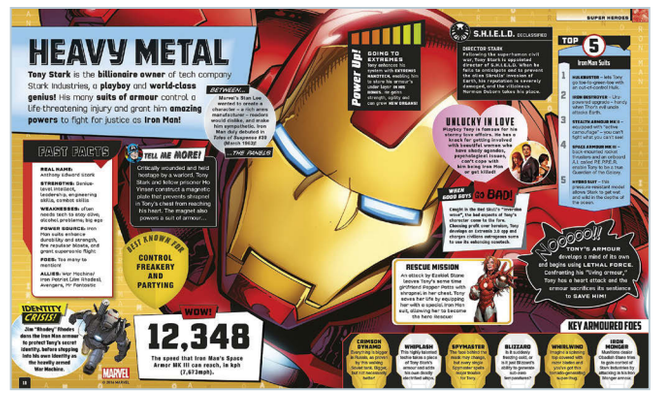
marvel.com

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With *Marvel's Doctor Strange* in cinemas right now, the timing is perfect to pick up the new Marvel book and find out more about the Sorcerer Supreme.







240 PAGES OF ALL-ACTION COMIC BOOK FUN AND FACTS

Between the pages of Super Hero facts and figures you'll find eye-catching artwork showing off the amazing comic art that Marvel has become world renowned for. We love the Hulk pages, filled with quotes from the Bruce Banner's alter ego, "Hulk is not sorry, Hulk is Hulk!"

With 240 pages of all-action comic book fun and facts, this new Marvel book is enough to satisfy every comic book fan. **GM**

***Marvel Absolutely Everything You Need To Know* is available from all good bookshops now, published by DK at £17.99. Get 50% off at www.whsmith.co.uk using promo code DKMARVEL*.**

*Terms and conditions apply, offer only available online until 22 November.

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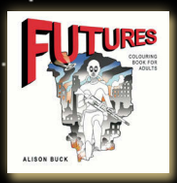
Independent publisher of Speculative Fiction

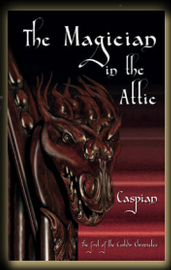
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NOVEMBER 11-13, 2016



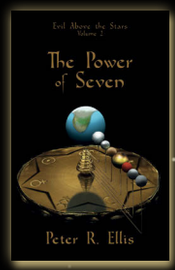


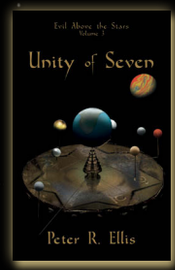


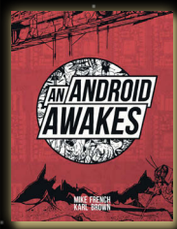


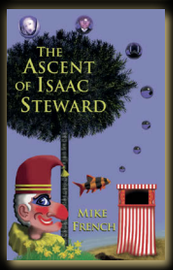








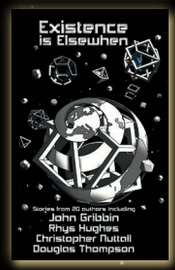














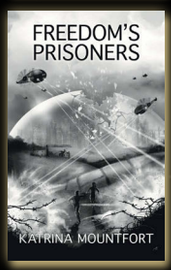


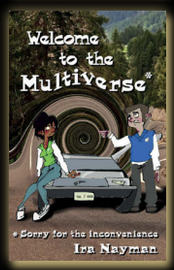


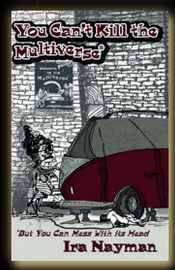






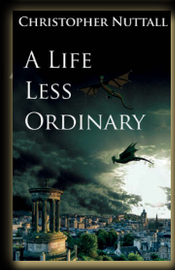




















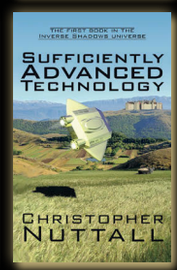


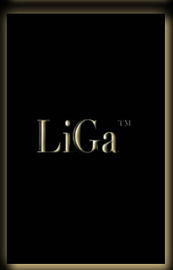
















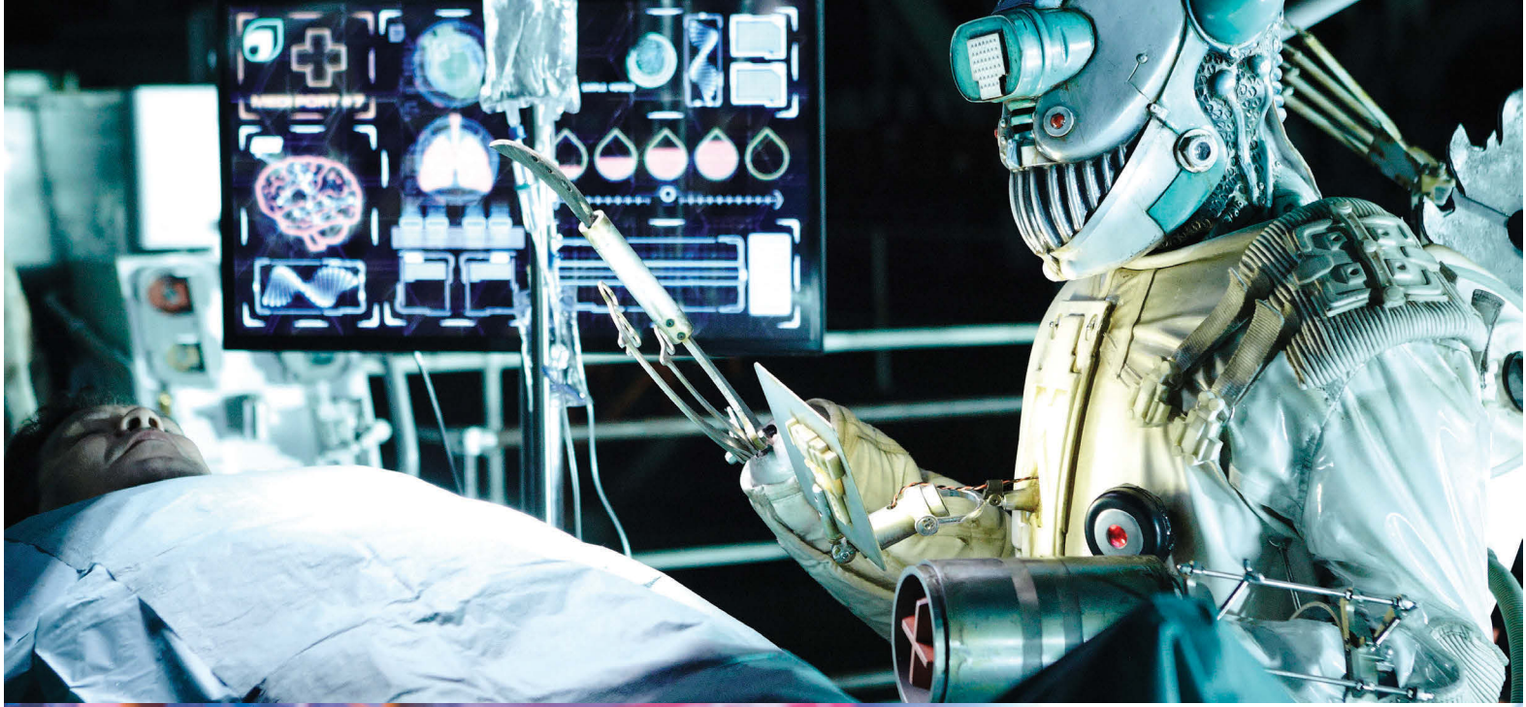


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When Kryten has a mid-life crisis and paints himself Ferrari red, the crew take him to visit a mech from his original fleet called Butler.



[TV]

Red Dwarf XI

CREATED BY ROB GRANT, DOUG NAYLOR // STARRING CHRIS BARRIE, CRAIG CHARLES, DANNY JOHN-JULES, ROBERT LLEWELLYN // CHANNEL, DAVE

The Boys From The Dwarf have been dropping unsubtle hints of late about the inevitability of a live Red Dwarf tour, as its 30th anniversary approaches – and watching the new series on Dave, you can see just what a smart move that would be for all concerned. The tickets for recordings have now reached near-gold dust status, and the fun the audience is having in every episode of series XI suggests it's an experience thousands more fans would love to have. This return has a strong feeling of being a chamber piece, with great guest stars like Kevin Eldon as a camp Replicant (reason enough to do a whole new series), but fundamentally built around the four stalwart stars in confined spaces, trading insults in a concerted effort to revive the spirits of the show's highest point, in the early 90s.

Perhaps they never reach those classic heights, but only the most curmudgeonly purists are griping about this tenth series, brought to Dave by a new production team including Baby Cow and strident young producer Richard Naylor – but always with his Dad, co-creator Doug, calling all the shots, devoting his life to maintaining Red Dwarf as a going concern for as long as is superhumanly possible.

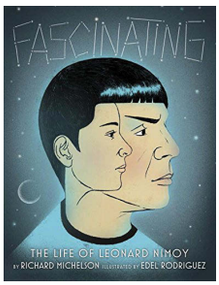
There's a definite improvement on the first experimental return to live studio sitcom for Dave, although of course the gaping plot holes from which Red Dwarf is now almost exclusively composed remain as easily laughed off as ever. The first episode Twentica, which debuted well in advance on UKTV's own site, was a good case in point – think about any element of the plot for more than a few nanoseconds and your brain would short circuit (Why would Einstein hang out in an alternative New York, in a world without science, anyway? If technology was banned, why were people driving cars? And so on, unto infinity), but with another crowd-pleasing woofer around the corner at every given moment, only the most annoying confirmed virgin would care too much. Second outing Samsara contained the setting still further, with a touchingly low-key story of doomed love and a reversed Karma drive, but best of all was the emphasis on dialogue which could have come from any classic series, "I thought you could swing from trees with ya big monkey arms?" Third episode Give & Take was positively a tribute to the show's comedic best.

> THERE'S STILL SO MUCH THAT CAN BE DONE IN THIS UNIVERSE

Either you think fan service is two dirty words, and that Red Dwarf should have been pensioned off as a broken franchise at the end of the last millennium... or you're having as good a time with these middle-aged space adventures as we are. There's still so much that can be done in this universe, and it's good in this series that the Cat finally gets an episode all of his own, and characters are allowed to develop somewhat (Rimmer becoming an officer? Who'd have dreamt it?). Ultimately, the fact that series XII is already in the can, and Naylor has pretty much sworn never to retire the series, suggests that those who are happy to let their beloved old Boys From The Dwarf enjoy their laps of honour for as long as they are able, will be the ones who get the last laugh. **GM**

✪✪✪✪✪

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[BOOK]

Fascinating: The Life of Leonard Nimoy

£15 // WRITERS, RICHARD MICHELSON, EDEL RODRIGUEZ5 // PUBLISHER, RANDOM HOUSE

This simple children's retelling of the life of the original and unbeatable Mr Spock (with a foreword by his inheritor, Zachary Quinto) could have seemed like a needless scheme. But, for the kids of Trekkies all over the world it's actually a beautifully human journey through the actor's trials and tribulations, showing the reader that honest hard work can turn you from an impoverished cab driver into the planet's favourite alien. This is a warming tribute to a great man, who lived long and prospered.



[GAME]

Bioshock: The Collection

£32 // PUBLISHER, 2K GAMES

All three Bioshocks return this month with a fresh coat of paint, a 1080p overhaul and a reasonably stable 60fps, as well as a raft of goodies including scrapped designs, commentary and a series of vignettes featuring series' creator, Ken Levine, and his cohorts discussing the creation of the series. If you somehow managed to miss the games on launch, then this is a must, but if you've already clocked the lot, there's not much chew over here beyond the minor visual tweaks.



[BLU-RAY]

Labyrinth 30th Anniversary Digibook

£15 // STARRING, DAVID BOWIE, JENNIFER CONNELLY // STUDIO, SONY PICTURES

Before January, Labyrinth was as culty a cult movie as you could wish to have to explain to somebody – never seen as Jim Henson's finest hour, the Terry Jones-penned yarn was bursting with camp, and a visceral, fantastical spectacle. Sadly it took the death of its seemingly immortal star to turn the film into a bona fide classic. This re-release comes with a celebratory glossy booklet giving more info on the film's production, but it's a gift for the uninitiated, rather than a must-have purchase.

[FILM]

Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children

STARRING, EVA GREEN, ASA BUTTERFIELD, CHRIS O'DOWD // DIRECTOR, TIM BURTON // STUDIO, 20TH CENTURY FOX

If Tim Burton is at the helm you know you're in for a twisted, weird and wonderful ride of a movie, and Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children doesn't disappoint with a bunch of kids that need to hide themselves away in an alternate dimension to avoid the local villagers seeing them off with pitchforks and burning torches. The home is set on a secluded Welsh island where The IT Crowd's Chris O'Dowd takes his son for a relaxing therapy holiday, trying his best at an American accent. We prefer him Irish. With the suspicious locals in a battered old pub and lots of scenes on lanes and fields the movie has a vibe of The Wicker Man and American Werewolf in London to it, which isn't a bad thing of course. The Tim Burton effect comes into place when you realise what these kids can do. One has to wear heavy boots to avoid floating away, one is invisible, one makes things come to life with a heart and a young girl is embarrased to eat, as her gnashing teeth are in the back of her head! The story is adapted from the 2011 novel by Ransom Riggs by Jane Goldman, not only famous for being Jonathan Ross's wife, but also an accomplished screenwriter, having worked as a collaborator on X-Men: Days of Future Past, Kick-Ass and Daniel Radcliffe horror The Woman in Black. A weird story, but great FX, and worth a spin.





With a stellar cast including Samuel L Jackson, Judi Dench, Rupert Everett and Chris O'Dowd, Tim Burton's new movie is a must-see.

©20TH CENTURY FOX



[GAME]

Batman: The Telltale Series

£25 // PS4/XB1/PS3/360
// PUBLISHER, WARNER BROS

Right off the bat (we're not going to pardon the pun), Telltale Games' Batman does the smart thing – it focuses, rather heavily, on Bruce Wayne rather than the Dark Knight. It's a smart move because there's another developer out there with Wayne's alter ego suitably tied up – Rocksteady. Venturing back to the character's early history with Harvey Dent while he runs for Mayor of Gotham, his dealings with Carmine Falcone and, best of all, his relationship with the sultry new lady in town – Selina Kyle.

The developers weave a tight tale here that combines the usual exploratory stuff with Batman's detective mode and a slew of cool gadgets. It may only be two episodes in at time of writing, but there are some weighty decisions waiting in both episodes for you coupled with some killer twists and turns guaranteed to have you gagging for this full compilation on disc. Despite a sluggish start this one's shaping up to be one of the most interesting takes on Batman to date.

✪✪✪✪✪



[DVD]

Game of Thrones, Season 6

£28 // STARRING, PETER DINKLAGE, KIT HARINGTON // STUDIO, WARNER

With viewers on Amazon Prime reporting streaming problems with the picture quality, everyone should rejoice as Game of Thrones is released in HD on blu-ray and DVD this month. If you are a newcomer to the goings on in Westeros, this isn't really the place to start. So many storylines have passed under the bridge, we recommend you go back to season one and begin from the beginning. This season has its highs and lows, ending with a cracker of a season finale. The show is guilty of wasting some episodes as purely set-up for bigger things to come, but it's always a pleasure to spend more time with the characters and settings from the mind of George R. R. Martin. Game of Thrones has always been renowned for the short-lived (quite literally) cameos from Hollywood A-listers, and this season doesn't disappoint with Ian McShane roped in (you'll get it when you watch it) to play Brother Ray and Richard E Grant as Yohn Royce plus Brit favourite Tim McInnerny as Robett Glover. Top TV.

✪✪✪✪✪



[GAME]

Resident Evil 4 HD

£20 // PUBLISHER, CAPCOM

Resident Evil 4 is the Evil Dead of videogames. There've been so many rereleases we've lost count of the amount of times we've played through. Still, that doesn't detract from the fact it's one of the best action horror titles ever. Sure, it's dated looking, but this new version runs at a smooth 60fps in 1080p resolution, making for one of the sturdiest versions of the game to date, but we can't help but pine for a more 'definitive' re-master built from the ground up using a modern game engine.

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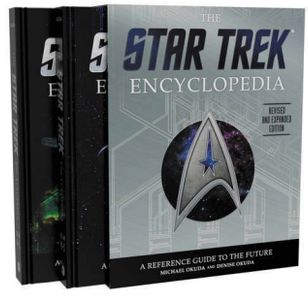
[FILM]

The Infiltrator

STARRING, BRYAN CRANSTON // DIRECTOR, BRAD FURMAN // STUDIO, BROAD GREEN

Bryan Cranston is back in the world of drugs, only this time he's on the opposite side of the law playing US government agent Robert Mazur, the man responsible for infiltrating Pablo Escobar's drugs empire in the Eighties. Despite a solid performance from the former Breaking Bad star, the narrative feels convoluted and slowly begins to lose focus, so much so that by the time the credits roll you've already stopped caring about what's happening. Dodge it and instead give Narcos a spin on Netflix.

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[BOOK]

The Star Trek Encyclopedia, Revised and Expanded

£65 // PUBLISHER, HARPER DESIGN

Of course, you're likely to buy this new edition of the all-time oracle of Roddenberry's future universe at a greatly reduced price, but even then, that price makes it clear that nobody will be picking this up for a spot of toilet reading. Aimed solely at the most committed, wealthy Trek obsessives, within those circles of course this is nothing short of a life-or-death necessity. Certainly, for when the internet is down and you need to know who played Spock's great uncle Spip or something.

✪✪✪✪✪







[TV]

Luke Cage, Season 1

// STARRING,MIKE COLTER, MAHERSHALA ALI, FRANKIE FAISON, ALFRE WOODARD
// NETWORK, NETFLIX

Let's be honest here, what Marvel is doing with its street level characters via Netflix usurps its big screen counterparts in every way imaginable. With each show the comic book powerhouse has managed to not only craft an incredibly distinct world while at the same time maintaining a tone that ensures all three characters and their settings feel perfectly connected, despite their differing themes and approach to heroism.

Unfurling several months after the events of Jessica Jones season one, Luke Cage sees the cool as ice hero relocating from Hell's Kitchen to Harlem in a bid to keep a low profile. And what a low profile it is – Cage ekes out a meagre existence cleaning the floor of a barbershop for Frankie Faison's Pops character, before venturing to a nightclub owned by crime boss Cornell Stoke aka Cottonmouth to scrub piles of dirty dishes.

Naturally, these stories and more soon begin to connect, and when they do Cage is forced to switch from gentleman scrubber to badass superhero, resulting in some fantastic bouts of fisticuffs. Of course the show isn't just about Cage handing out beat downs and cleaning up the streets of Harlem, it's about much more than that.

It addresses a plethora of present day issues, delivering a pretty poignant and often harrowing view of street life for people in a community such as Harlem - in particular the younger generation attracted to crime as a means to get rich quick - much like The Wire (a show the creators cite as a major inspiration for Luke Cage) did so brilliantly with the city of Baltimore. Like the previous outings you really don't need to know much about the character before settling down to watch this. In fact, you don't even need to have seen Daredevil or Jessica Jones.

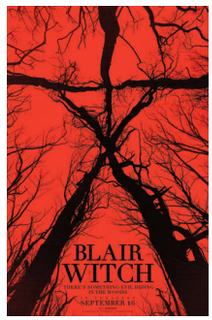
IT'S COMPELLING, IT'S DARING, IT'S PACKED TO THE BRIM WITH MEMORABLE MOMENTS AND CHARACTERS

Sure, the nods to those characters and Cage's comic book origins are there for the diehards, but this one, like its predecessors, stands mighty tall on its own thanks to stellar storylines and deeply defined characters, especially the superb Misty Knight. Whereas Cage was one of the standout characters in Jessica Jones, Simone Missick's portrayal of the NYPD detective is arguably one of the best things the series has going for it.

Luke Cage is unlike any superhero show we've seen before. It's compelling, it's daring, it's packed to the brim with memorable moments and characters, and it just to happens to feature one of the best soundtracks this side of Guardians of the Galaxy. Is this the best Marvel Netflix series to date? Yes, yes it is. Well, at least until the next one arrives, of course.

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©NETFLIX



If horror movies are not scary enough for you these days, try the 360° VR Blair Witch experience on the film's website. Oh. My. God.



[FILM]

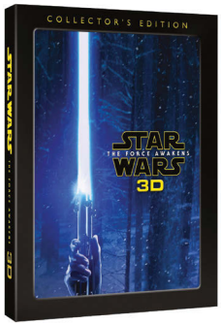
Blair Witch

STARRING, JAMES ALLEN MCCUNE, CALLIE HERNANDEZ // DIRECTOR, ADAM WINGARD // STUDIO, LIONSGATE

Back in 1999 the horror world was transformed by the The Blair Witch Project. It was found footage horror that threw actors into the woods and asked them to film their own descent into madness. Now, 17 years later, the creative minds behind The Guest are taking us back to the woods again, and the results are mixed. The plot is very familiar. A group of curious witch hunters take head-mounted cameras and drones and hope to find proof of the dreaded Blair Witch in the Burkittsville Woods. Obviously things go wrong.

Director Adam Wingard and screenwriter Simon Barrett are definitely having fun with the Blair Witch lore and craft some genuinely horrific and thrilling set pieces. The legend of the Witch is added to without spoiling the mystery and there are also a few Easter Eggs scattered around to please fans. However, there is a sense that not enough was done to make this sequel feel any more than an updated remake. The modern tech isn't utilised to craft any original scares and by the time we reach Rustin Parr's cabin at the finale (again) we all know where it's heading. Ultimately, Blair Witch is a lot of fun and proof that found footage can still be effective in building frights, but it's hard to care for the characters and you're left feeling a little hollow and wanting more.

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[BLU-RAY]

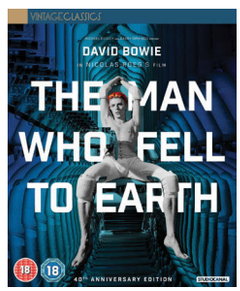
Star Wars: The Force Awakens Collector's Edition

£25 // STARRING, HARRISON FORD, MARK HAMILL // STUDIO, LUCASFILM

The popular Disney franchise returned with an explosion last Christmas and was greeted with a tsunami of goodwill, glowing reviews and oceans of tears shed by middle-aged fans who felt that the sins of George Lucas' prequels were at last being absolved. JJ Abrams' take on What Happened Next, huge spoiler plot-point and all, didn't just overwhelmingly please die-hard fans, but families and floating geeks the world over, queuing up for the closest thing to a cinematic thrill ride in years.

This new blu-ray release comprises three discs and includes everything that was on the original spring release, plus both the 2D and 3D versions of the film, a new commentary from Abrams, and production featurettes, including a warming two-hander from Daisy Ridley and John Boyega. This is all hugely optional for anyone who already bought the first non-collector's edition, of course, but if you feel Disney could do with a bit more of your money, here's your chance to donate.

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[DVD]

The Man Who Fell To Earth: 40th Anniversary Edition

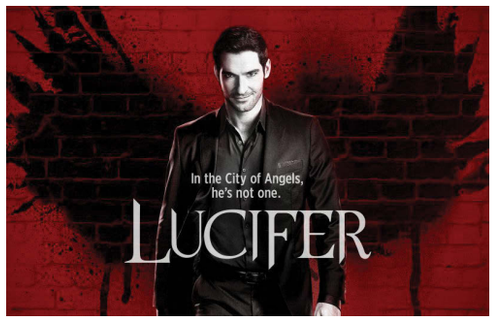
£20 // STARRING, DAVID BOWIE, RIP TORN // STUDIO, STUDIOCANAL

The Bowie reissues are of course coming on a storm nine months after we were all robbed of his presence, and taking music out of the equation, there's surely no greater evidence of The Thin White Duke's iconic turn as the ET just trying to get home, in Nicolas Roeg's 1976 adaptation of the classic science fiction novel. This 40th anniversary release is packed with interviews from seemingly everyone still living who worked on the film – including a 1977 chat with Bowie himself – but you only get one chat with Roeg, and no commentary.

The Collector's Edition also comes with an array of art cards, posters and a booklet, plus the official soundtrack (which, of course, has no Bowie on it), but if you don't have the movie itself in your collection, that's reason enough to buy this edition. To this day, practically every alarming frame of film could be frozen, printed and qualify as singularly astonishing art. With blu-rays at £20 and DVDs at only £13, it's an essential purchase.

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©LIONSGATE



Following Preacher and Outcast in adapting from a comic book, Lucifer is showing now on Amazon Prime.



[TV]

Lucifer, Season 2

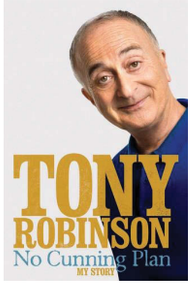
// STARRING, TOM ELLIS, LAUREN GERMAN, D.B. WOODSIDE
// STUDIO, FOX // NETWORK, AMAZON PRIME

Amazon Prime has turned up the heat this month with the return of DC's Lucifer, the comic book cum procedural show based on the Vertigo funny book originally created by Neil Gaimin all the way back in 1989. If you haven't checked out the first run yet, you probably should have a quick ogle before carrying on.

Featuring a nifty blend of drama, witty banter, gruesome murders and Tom Ellis' excellent turn as the Morningstar, Lucifer's debut was, despite a few lulls here and there, a surprisingly solid affair that ended with the perfect set up for this sophomore season's big bad – his mother. While the case of the week spin may have worked in the first season thanks to the supernatural element, we're hoping the writers play it down a little from here on in, and instead choose to focus on the more obvious and interesting hook – Lucifer himself.

For now, we're offered a minor glimpse into the inner workings of his complicated relationship with his mother and the much larger question at hand that will no doubt play a major part of season two – if she's not here to kill him, then what exactly does she want? Our guess is as good as yours, but there's no doubt this question and more will be answered in the coming months.

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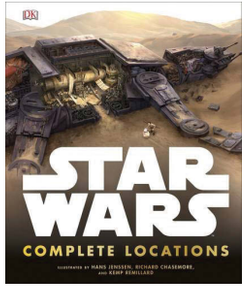
[BOOK]

No Cunning Plan

£7 // WRITER, TONY ROBINSON
PUBLISHER, SIDGWICK & JACKSON

To more than one generation, Sir Tony is probably seen only as a guy in an anorak peering into ditches in Time Team, or perhaps the creator of Shrove Tuesday memes – or, at a push, history's favourite stinky loser, Sod-Off Baldrick. But his story is far more astonishing than many of his colleagues can muster, from free-love-filled theatre communes of the 1970s to run-ins with Terry Pratchett, John Wayne and many others. And above all he remembers it all vividly and amusingly, so dig in.

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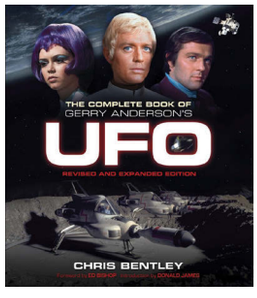
[BOOK]

Star Wars Complete Locations Updated Edition

£30 // PUBLISHER, DK

All updated for The Force Awakens with eight new pieces of artwork and cross sections of some of the most famous places in the Star Wars Universe, this beautifully designed book from DK is a must for all fans of George Lucas' space opera. This version has Rey's home and Starkiller Base, with photographs and illustrations of places from Naboo to Kajju. We particularly love the presentation of the inner workings of the Death Star, and explanation of the Battle of Hoth.

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[BOOK]

The Complete Book of Gerry Anderson's UFO

£30 // WRITER, CHRIS BENTLEY
// PUBLISHER, SIGNUM BOOKS

Oddly, Anderson's long-mocked marionette-snubbing live action series has enjoyed a kitsch reappraisal recently, from hipster geeks mesmerised by the tin foil costumes and purple wigs. This is a mixed blessing for long-time fans who see it as Anderson's masterpiece, an adult approach to the alien invasion of Earth which stands up to this day. Bentley's expanded ultimate guide is aimed at the latter group, and contains a new section on Anderson's earlier live action film, Doppelganger.

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©WARNER BROS/FOX





[GAME]

Worlds of Magic Planar Conquest

£28 // PS4/XB1
PUBLISHER, MAXIMUM GAMES

Earlier last year developer Wastelands Interactive announced that Worlds of Magic would be crossing over from iOS to PS4, Xbox and PC. That never happened; instead the team reworked the game and added the subtitle, Planar Conquest, which has finally made its way to console and computers this month. Conquest is a turn based strategy game with multiple worlds ripe for exploration and looting, and while it may not the most impressive title in the genre, it's got plenty going for it, in particular the feverishly addictive building mechanics that require you to craft buildings, build an army and manage reams of resources.

That said, with the action unfurling on tiles there are some irksome issues. Cities need to be separated by five tiles, which is all well and good, until you discover that a tile just outside your walls harbours a rare resource that you can't access. Brawls are fun too, and especially rewarding once you've taken the time to master your armies; gaining the upper hand in a scuffles is a fiendishly addictive feeling that'll most certainly have you chomping at the bit for the next bout of digital fisticuffs. Despite a slow start and a little too much grind, Planar Conquest manages to make its mark on the weird and wonderful world of turn-based strategy titles.

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[GAME]

LEGO Dimensions: The A-Team Fun Pack

£13 //
PUBLISHER, WARNER BROS INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT

It's been a while since we championed the amazing work being done by the TT Games team and Warner Bros, in conjunction with the Danish boffins at LEGO, but boy have they been busy. In just the last few weeks they have released new Fun Packs, Team Packs and Level Packs for LEGO Dimensions that will rock the world of all 80's geeks. Take this The A-Team Fun Pack here, with super-cool Mr T LEGO minifigure complete with Mohawk and beard plus a tiny A-Team van to drive around in. They are perfect recreations of the iconic show in LEGO form.

For those uninitiated in the ways of LEGO Dimensions, pop these two on the portal that comes with the main game and all of a sudden Mr T is running around in your game! Download the level data and you get to take on a new set of puzzles, over new terrain, all to the A-Team theme tune. It's like Saturday nights in 1986 all over again!

Also in the shops right now is a Ghostbusters 2016 set, with the lady Ghostbusters in their jumpsuits and a brilliant LEGO Slimer, E.T., The Goonies, Gremlins, Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them, Sonic the Hedgehog, Mission Impossible and Adventure Time, with Knight Rider and Beetlejuice promised for next year. Geek overload!

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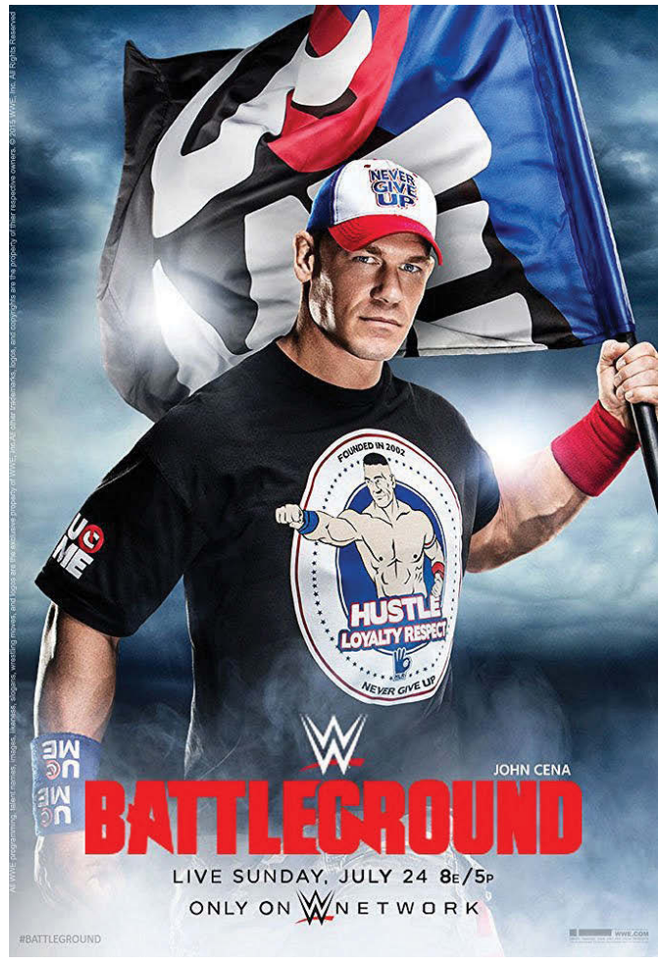


With Mr T and The A-Team to play right now, and Knight Rider coming next year, it's an 80's TV geek's dream!









[BLU-RAY]

WWE: Battleground 2016

£25 // STARRING, DEAN AMBROSE, SETH ROLLINS, ROMAN REIGNS // STUDIO, FREMANTLE HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Battleground is something of an oddity. Taking place on 24 July, the event resides right in the midst of WWE's new-fangled brand split. At this time, the company decided to once again divide their roster in two, with each respective side drafted to either Smackdown or Raw. Post-draft but occurring prior to each show's relaunch, the result is a somewhat bizarre situation for storyline continuity throughout this PPV.

Going in, there's a lack of consequence to some of the action throughout this blu-ray, because as a viewer, you're already aware that the storylines have been determined by the positioning of the draftees. It's difficult to care then about Rusev's interaction with the bumbling Mojo Rawley, or the Wyatt Family's place-holding battle with the New Day. Equally though, this 'one last outing' feeling does lend itself to some fine action. The aforementioned six-man tag match is a great deal of fun, as is another frenetic scrap featuring six grapplers, John Cena, Enzo and Big Cass versus The Club. Indeed, tandem action is served well all-round, as Women's Champion Charlotte teams with Dana Brooke to battle Sasha Banks and her 'mystery' partner. The unveiling of Sasha's chum is a deeply satisfying moment that blows the roof off the building, but the match itself is also fun.

There are disappointments. We can't imagine anyone possibly considering The Miz versus Darren Young as entertainment, while Zack Ryder's tussle with Rusev is a waste of 'The Bulgarian Brute'.

Better is a blinding main event between all three former members of 'The Shield', Dean Ambrose, Seth Rollins and Roman Reigns. This is wild stuff that neatly harks back to their efforts as a trio, with the WWE Title now at stake.

> IT'S SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO RECOMMEND A WWE STAND-ALONE SHOW AS A PURCHASE

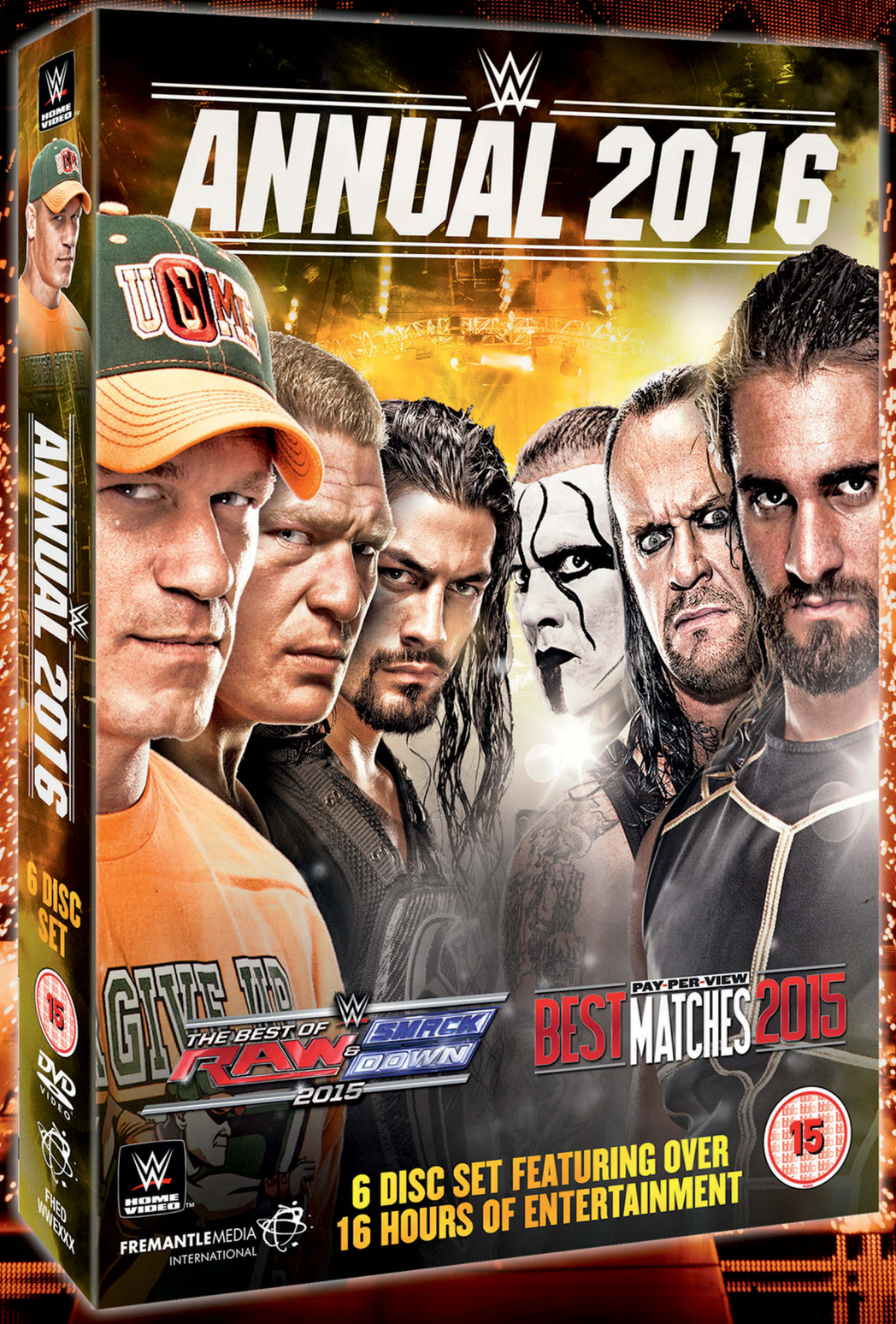
Best of all however, is the culmination of the feud between Canadian rivals, Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens. It would be difficult to imagine a better conclusion to their storied feud than this scintillating war. Zayn has been woefully underused in recent times, while Owens has seen corporate insecurity result in his positioning being very stop-start. Here though, they're simply allowed to do what they both do best: let their in-ring abilities speak for themselves as both shine in one of the best matches of 2016.

It's sometimes difficult to recommend a WWE stand-alone show as a purchase in 2016, giving the vast reach of the WWE Network. But in that regard, all involved should be commended for including several extra features, rather than adhering to the old-fashioned approach of just shoving a solitary pre-show match into a bonus features section. This is a nice touch, and the icing on the cake for what is one of the company's better events thus far this year. Ignore any confusion over who belongs to which show, and you'll be treated to some very fine grappling indeed.

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It's amazing what games can crop up once the source material is out of copyright.

Oz: Broken Kingdom

iOS FREE // ANDROID FREE
DEVELOPER, NEXON M INC

Due to pressure from children across the world, and against his own initial wishes, L. Frank Baum wrote sequels to the The Wonderful Wizard of Oz right up until his death in May 1919. There were 13 in total, and all are in the public domain, which might make you wonder why none of them were used as by this otherwise excellent and vividly sumptuous RPG. Instead it opts to craft its own shallow sequel to the first American fairytale, and to rather mixed results.

Ignoring its trite narrative, Oz: Broken Kingdom is mostly a quite beautiful and engaging affair that has a luxurious visual splendour and general air of opulence. Dorothy and the titular wizard have vanished. Oz is being beset by an inexplicable Evil Darkness, and so we're swiftly introduced to a brand new heroine by the name of Ophelia Shen who is sucked into the magical land not by a tornado, but a whirlpool that devours her ship and somehow leaves her alone on a mysterious beach.

The first thing you'll notice about Ophelia is that she has a face familiar to a thousand free-to-play games, and so does a great job of lowering what otherwise is a remarkable visual tone. The second is that she's seemingly unperturbed by her shift in situation, even when she finds herself inexplicably dressed a bit like an elf and using daggers to slice off energy points from an assortment of weird creatures. Then she meets the Lion, Scarecrow and Tin Man, and simply accepts that they're all off to find Dorothy and the Wizard, and that despite now being in a team she'll never get to fight as part of one.

Combat certainly has depth and there are plenty of attributes to level-up and enjoy, but quite why only one character can be selected pre-battle to actually engage against numerous enemies remains a mystery. You move to locations on a map, have a series of scraps, and at no time do you actually see Ophelia and her new friends actually fight as a squad. Shouldn't they be at least able to link arms and trample enemies as they cruise up the Yellow Brick Road? Evidently not, which is certainly a shame as otherwise Oz presents an elegant take on the turn-based RPG genre. It'll certainly try to get you to spend real money for boosts, but as long as you've got patience and don't expect to play for hours at a time, such requests can be largely ignored.

A MAN MADE OF STRAW REALLY SHOULDN'T BE CASTING FIREBALL SPELLS

What can't however, is why the now learned Scarecrow has become smart enough to use magic, yet lacks the brains to realise that a man made of straw really shouldn't be casting fireball spells. Had the Wicked Witch of the West not been long melted you might expect her to appear and attack by conjuring tidal waves from her fingertips, and so there's a mild suggestion that the developers really aren't that familiar with the subject matter, and that the graphical layer could have featured pretty much any protagonists. Ophelia doesn't seem to want to go home, her friends have already found their inner strengths, but despite such a lack of any character development the resulting experience is a rewarding one.

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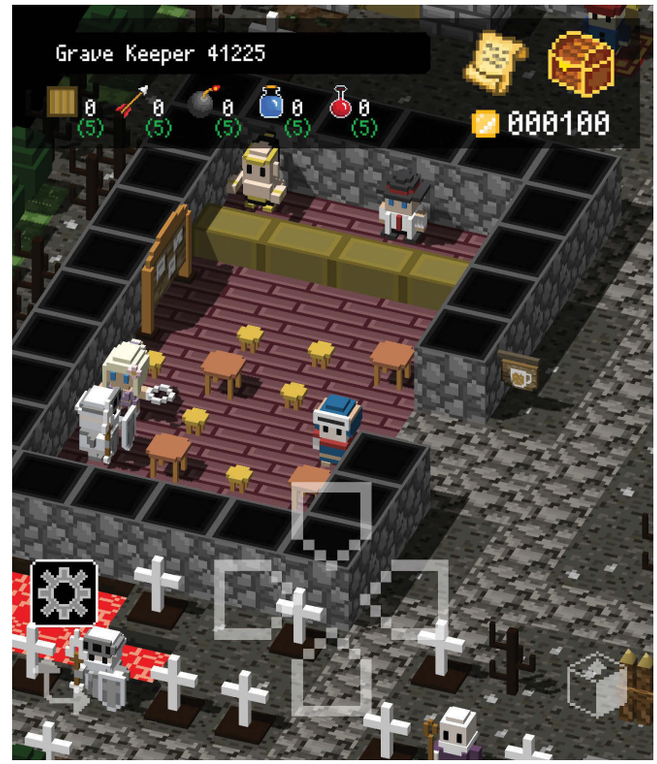
Dungeon of Gravestone

iOS FREE // ANDROID FREE
DEVELOPER, WONDERLAND KAZKIRI INC.



Randomly generated dungeons await your inevitably ill-fated adventurer in yet another take on a well-worn genre, but don't shrug just yet. Dungeon of Gravestone may look like it has borrowed its style and setting from an uncountable number of games, once you get past its initial few levels it reveals itself as something at once sweet and magnificently deadly, with something vaguely fresh to say. You see, the gravestone of the title will ultimately be your very own, while the ones you encounter belong to other hapless heroes who have succumbed to their injuries. Like Dark Souls, when you die you can leave a message for other players to discover. Unlike Dark Souls, your journey to your death is bright, breezy and endearingly blocky, with simple swipe and tap controls being all you need to delve deeper into the depths and deal with increasing dangers. What's more, your health is constantly depleting, making explorations feel fantastically urgent, while your ability to bomb your way through walls adds to a sense of direct tangibility. It all combines to make for a cute yet treacherous experience that'll have you eager to hop around just one more area, then another, before you realise that you've become addicted.

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Samarost 3

iOS £3.99 // STEAM £14.99
DEVELOPER, AMANATA DESIGN

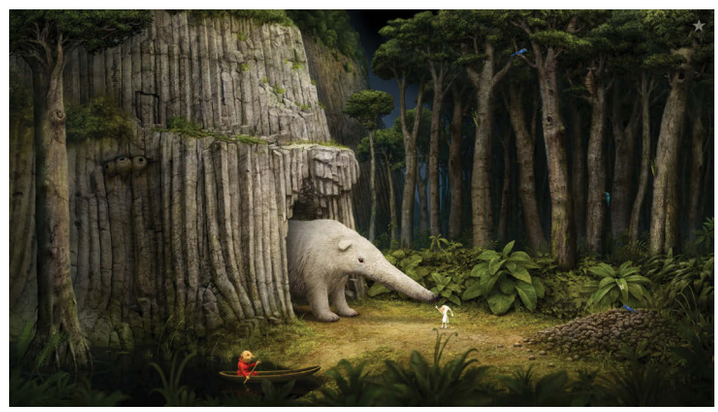


If you like your point-and-click adventures to swiftly explain the Five Ws of who, where, what, when and why, then don't expect this endearingly imaginative take on the genre to fill you in. Who are you? A gnome in a onesie. Where are you? Initially, on gnarled wooden stump that's somehow floating in space, looks a bit like an toad, and is matted in fine hair. What? Yeah, it's best not to ask. When? Presumably sometime when the universe was built of pure imagination. Why? Simply because.

Without making one lick of sense, Samarost 3 manages to hold itself together fantastically well and succeeds on every level, and at practically all times. Visually it's a constant and inspirational delight, but it's the audio that truly deserves praise. Many puzzles are musical in nature, and at all times you're being serenaded by sounds that'll intoxicate your ear drums. Solutions to the challenges the mechanics pose are never that far out of reach, nor that complex, but all offer a uniqueness that matches the overall insane illustrator's style to create a world that is at once unbelievable and yet highly credible and not unlike encountering Dr. Seuss after overdosing on unpasteurised blue cheese.

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Halcyon 6: Starbase

STEAM £14.99 //
DEVELOPER, MASSIVE DAMAGE INC



Here's an indie game that does Star Trek better than anything official. Halcyon 6 is, at you might have guessed, about commanding a star base and increasing its abilities in a style similar to XCOM. It's about building battle fleets too, engaging in three-on-three ship combat, and exploring the cosmos to build outposts and gain materials necessary for technological advancement. You'll even get to send beloved officers on dangerous away missions and to enjoy a script written with genuine wit that makes interactions with alien factions far more amusing than they should be.

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Price

STEAM FREE //
DEVELOPER, YETU GAME



If Price has a cost, it's in the amount of patience it'll demand from you before you can begin to really enjoy its creepy charms. Seemingly translated into English by someone who lied about their language skills, it's a horror adventure that's has an unsettling atmosphere that really does deserve to be played through late at night, in a single two-hour session, possibly with a walkthrough open in your internet browser just to make sure you don't get too confused. Cut scenes have been removed from its native version, which makes for some bemusement. Despite all its faults, Price still manages to be distinctly unsettling and unnervingly entertaining.

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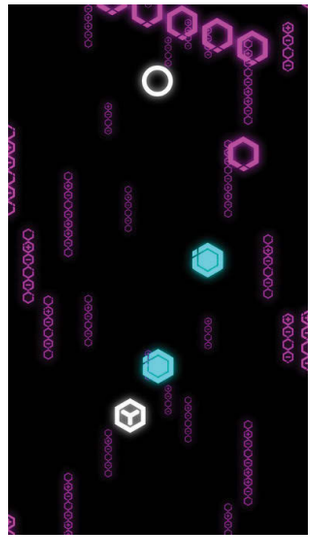
Satellina Zero

iOS FREE //
DEVELOPER, PETER SMITH

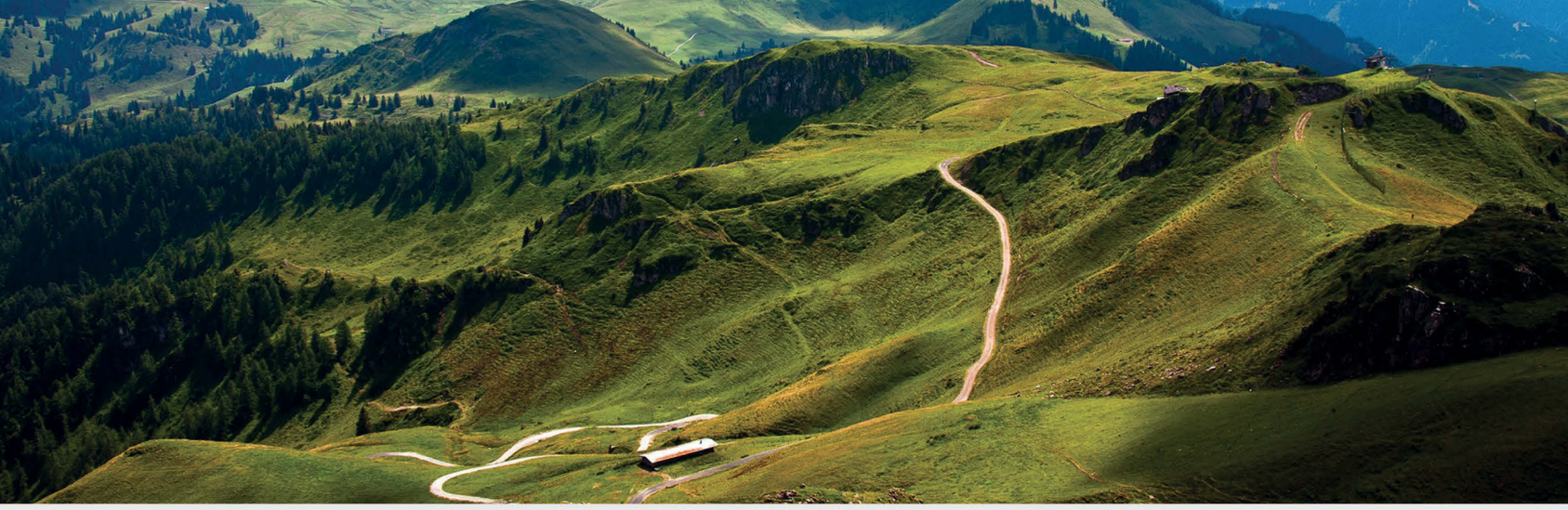


A shoot-'em-up that doesn't actually feature any shooting and a music game that's not really that musical, Satellina is absolutely perfect for those times when you don't want to get too deep into anything complex and just want to test your dexterity. Your hexagon lives at the bottom of the screen and can be swiped to move left or right, or tapped to jump to a new position. Tapping it changes its colour, which is handy as to actually score points you need to be the same colour when you're struck by the descending shapes. It's a shooter where you want to get hit, then, and one that provides a catchy rhythm to keep you going. Enjoyable yet not gripping, it's a bit like Ikaruga for pacifists.

✪✪✪✪✪







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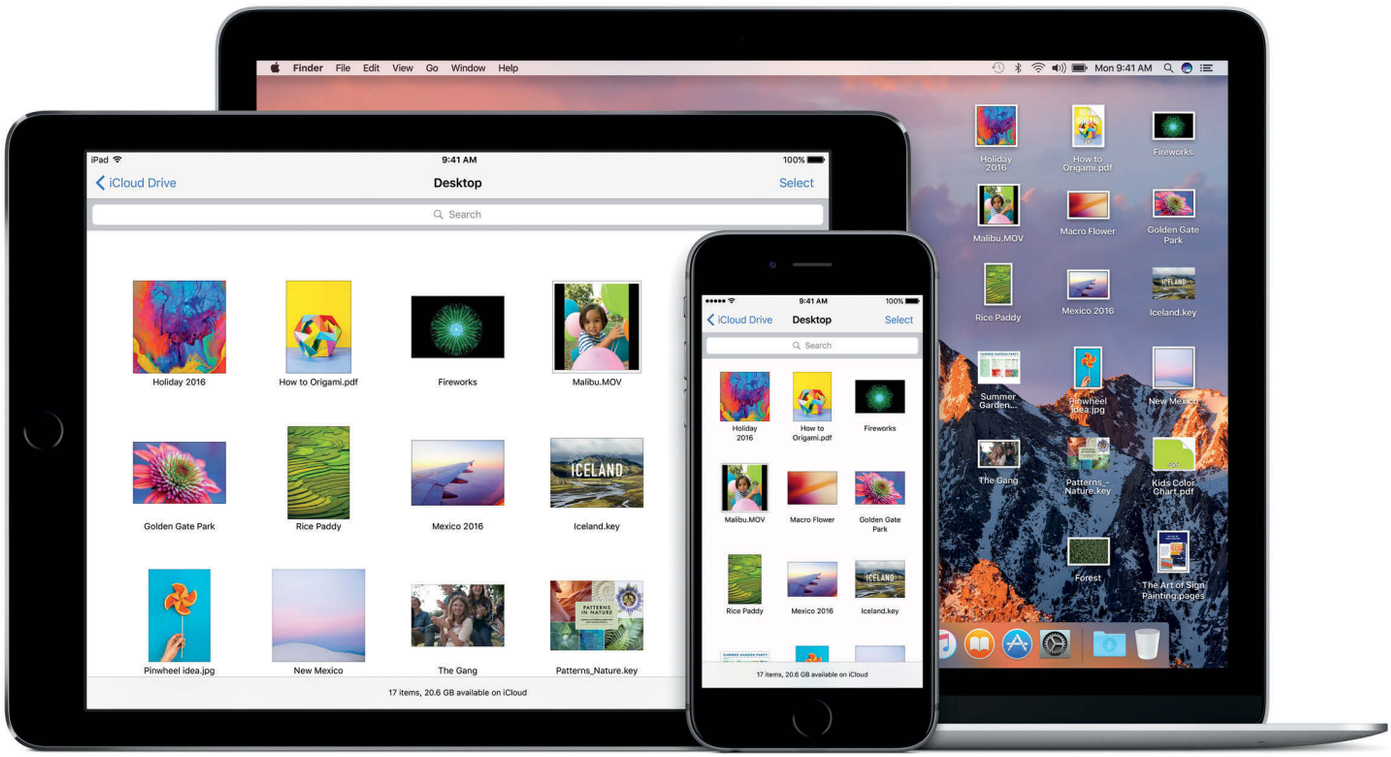


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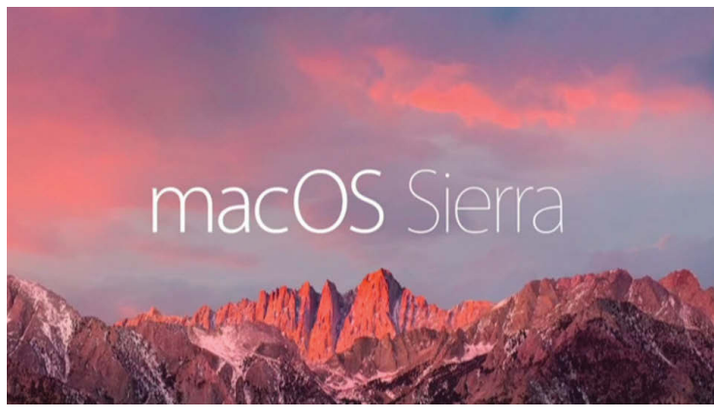
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All Systems Go!

Apple brings Macs and mobile devices closer together with their new Mac operating system, macOS Sierra.



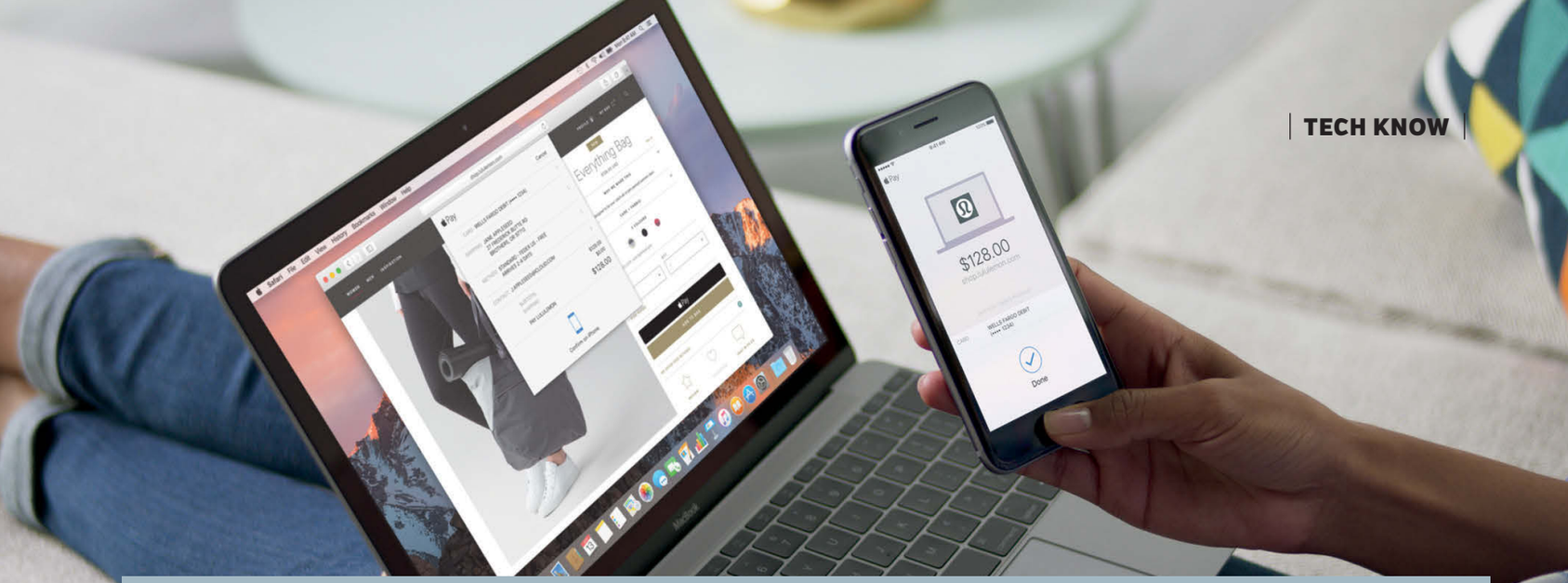
Just over two months after releasing it to the public in Beta, Apple officially launched the latest version of their Mac operating system – which this time goes under the codename of 'Sierra'. It is the 13th version of the Mac operating system, but this year's update is notable for dropping the 'X' branding that's stuck for the previous 12 versions, so now it's simply titled Sierra.

The reason for the name change is because Apple is keen to link all versions of their operating system together in one brand – so their mobile software is still called iOS, but the Watch operating system is called watchOS, while their TV one is, yep, tvOS. This gathering together of systems exemplifies the general feeling behind Sierra, as Apple continue to blur the lines between mobile and desktop software and devices – in other words, stuff that was on mobile is now on your Mac, too. Here's a breakdown of some of the features you can look forward to if you've yet to take the plunge.

SIRI

While it's something of a novelty (be honest, it really is) on the mobile platforms, Siri could really come into its own on the desktop, and it's one of Sierra's star new features. Rather than simply asking for directions to the nearest Chinese restaurant or setting a reminder to ring your siblings, you can ask Siri to find, for example, software that's lost deep inside your computer's hard drive, files created within a certain time, or pictures taken and stored during a set period.

©APPLE



WHAT ELSE CAN SIERRA DO?

PHOTOS
Apple has improved the facial recognition of the Photos app, and has added 'Memories', which groups together images that match certain criteria to make photo albums automatically.

APPLE PAY
Retailers can now add an Apple Pay button to their websites so that users can simply pay for anything using the iPhone or Apple Watch app – again though, you'll need Safari for this feature.

MESSAGES
If you use the Messages feature on your computer then you'll be delighted with the improved emojis and the ability to play YouTube videos in a Messages conversation.



ICLOUD UPLOADING

Sierra will now automatically upload all files from both your Desktop and Documents folders to iCloud. These files can then be shared across any device with iCloud installed on it, meaning that a document written on your Mac could then be viewed and edited on your iPad or Windows computer. As you probably know, you get 5GB of free storage in iCloud, but if you're planning on saving multiple files and folders, then you may need to invest in more space. If this isn't for you though, it's simple to turn the feature off completely.

UNIVERSAL CLIPBOARD

As we mentioned before, Sierra is paired with the corresponding mobile iOS more than any OS previously. The new Universal Clipboard allows you to save text on a Mac and then paste it directly into your iPad or iPhone – or the other way around if you prefer. If you want to carry on working on a document on the move, this is now much simpler. If you have an Apple Watch, you can even use it to unlock your Mac by simply wearing it near the computer.

PICTURE-IN-PICTURE VIDEOS

If you're anything like us, you'll frequently have something from YouTube or Vimeo playing on your computer while you work. Getting the window the correct size is often tricky though, but Sierra's new Picture-in-Picture feature enables you to extract a video from a web page and then play it in a floating window. The downside to this though is that you'll have to view it through Safari's HTML 5 video player.



CAN I RUN IT?

The big question for users when an upgrade is released is, "Can I run it?" It's the way the big corporations work – eventually their old tech becomes obsolete. So, if you're a Mac user, let's look under the hood...

If you bought your Mac in the last six years, then almost certainly. Any iMac produced in the latter part of 2009 (or newer) will run it, as well as any Apple laptop made since 2010. You will need at least 2GB of RAM and a whopping 8GB of storage space. Be warned though, installing a new operating system can slow down the computer dramatically, so make sure you've got well over the minimum specs needed to run it.

Watch and Learn

Apple's new series of watches take their wearable tech to the next level...



IT'S FASTER THAN THE ORIGINAL, HAS LONGER BATTERY LIFE, A BRIGHTER SCREEN AND BUILT-IN GPS

Apple Watch Series 2

PRICE, FROM £369 // AVAILABLE, NOW
APPLE.COM/UK/WATCH

As we mentioned last month, Apple used the launch event of the iPhone 7 to also quietly release the Apple Watch 2 – or, as they prefer, the Apple Watch Series 2. As expected, it's faster than the original, has longer battery life, a brighter screen and built-in GPS. And it's also fully waterproof up to 50 metres, but is all that enough to tempt either new buyers of the Apple Watch or those upgrading from the original?

In a slightly non-committal word, 'maybe'. While it's not a resounding hit, there's no doubt that the Apple Watch Series 2 is a hefty improvement over the original. It also comes with watchOS 3 built in – and yes, you can also play Pokémon Go on it.

Inside the Series 2 is the brand new SiP chip, with a dual-core processor that claims to be around 50% faster than the S1 chip, and a sharp new display that's considerably brighter, too. But perhaps the largest (and most welcome) addition to the Series 2 is the built-in GPS that is excellent for casual walkers, hikers and joggers. While it doesn't match some of the features and detail of a dedicated sports watch, it does work well as a general all-round fitness tracker.

So how much is all this new wearable tech going to cost you? Well, the basic model with a 38mm case size will set you back £369, but you can get a 42mm case for just £30 more. If you're willing to swap the aluminium casing for stainless steel then you can lower the price to £269, or there's also a Nike-themed device with an exclusive strap and Nike watch faces if you're dedicated to using your Series 2 for fitness.

There's no doubt at all that the Series 2 is the best smartwatch on the market, but to be fair there's not really that much competition, and if they can tweak the GPS software and features significantly then it could be used seriously for sports tracking.

ON THE OTHER HAND...

Rather than simply discontinue their original watch, Apple have rebranded it as the 'Series 1' device. It's around £100 cheaper than the updated model, but comes with a new dual-core processor and is also splash resistant. The fact that the Apple Watch Series 1 is cheaper and more powerful than the first model was on its release may tempt some away from getting the Series 2 device, but that extra £100 does buy you GPS, a brighter display and water resistance to 50 metres.



Google Daydream

PRICE, £69 // VR.GOOGLE.COM/DAYDREAM

The recent announcement of the Google Daydream (which was surely timed to steal some of Sony's thunder with their PlayStationVR) proved that Google's new headset is a considerable step up from the Cardboard devices they began with. The Daydream headset will be cheaper than Samsung's Gear VR, is covered in material rather than the traditional plastic coating of most VR headsets, and comes with a remote that enables you to control your phone while it's attached to the headset. The remote is a big step up, there will be games where you swing a bat, bowl or pilot a spaceship, all controlled from the remote. If the Daydream works as well as we suspect, then it could easily be the number one headset at the cheaper end of the market.



Google Pixel

PRICE, £599 // MADEBY.GOOGLE.COM/PHONE

Previously, Google's range of Nexus phones were made by a third-party company, but after creating their own hardware division last year, the company are finally ready to reveal the fruits of their labours: The Pixel and Pixel XL. Initially, the Google Pixel looks very similar to the iPhone, but only when you get closer do you realise that Google's device doesn't quite have the same build quality of Apple's phone. What it does have though is an excellent version of their Android software, that comes complete with Google Assistant built in (the first phone to have this) and the Duo and Allo apps, too. The stunning 12.3MP camera is also one of the best you'll find on any phone, but some may be put off by the high price of £599.



Nike Self-lacing Mag

PRICE, $10 A TICKET (ONLINE RAFFLE) // NIKE.COM/MAG

For some years now, designers the world over have been trying to create an actual shoe that mimics the self-lacing technology found in Back to the Future II. Now, after nearly ten years of research, someone's actually done it. The Nike Mag registers when your foot has been placed inside the shoe and then automatically begins to tighten the laces. There are three buttons that allow you to tighten the laces further, and light up LEDs fitted into the shoe to let you know how much battery remains. Nike is claiming that they've only made 89 pairs of the boots, which will be auctioned off for charity, but we're clinging to the hope that someone eventually mass-produces them. And while you're at it Nike, can you ask someone to invent a hoverboard, too? Thanks.

ASUS ZenBook 3

PRICE, FROM $1,099 // ASUS.COM/NOTEBOOKS/ASUS-ZENBOOK-3

Considering the enormous success of Apple's ultra-slim MacBook, it was never going to be long before someone tried to clone it with a Windows version. The company that's come closest is Asus, with their brand-new ZenBook 3. With a design that's close enough to get Apple's lawyers slightly twitchy, the ZenBook 3 is actually a stunning machine internally, offering considerably more power than Apple's laptop for around the same price. It's only when you realise that the build quality doesn't match the internals that the ZenBook starts to struggle. You have to admire Asus's nerve for producing such a similar machine to the MacBook, but we only hope that the inevitable ZenBook 4 is built as well as it performs.



TOP GEAR

TECH CAN BE COOL, TECH CAN BE SHINY, TECH CAN BE EXPENSIVE. MAKE SURE YOU SPEND YOUR WONGA ON THE RIGHT DEVICE WITH OUR ADVICE.



Anki Overdrive Supertrucks X52 Ice

£60 // ANKI // AVAILABLE, NOW

Move over Scalextric, there's a new guy in town – the Anki Overdrive racing system is like something smuggled back from the future in a time machine. It's an app-driven racing tech where you build your track, then the A.I. robotic Supercars learn it through a combination of artificial intelligence and strategy. The system has been taken one step further by the Hollywood card designer behind movies like Minority Report, TRON: Legacy and Total Recall – the arrival of the Supertrucks. Adding these big rigs into the mix is a recipe for racing carnage, just the way we like it. The X52 Ice edition is an exclusive for Smyths Toys Superstores in the UK.



Logitech Circle

£160 // LOGITECH.COM // AVAILABLE, NOW

Today cameras are everywhere: in our phones, on lamp posts, flying through the sky on drones, on the bus. Unless you've been burgled lately, the one place you probably haven't set up cameras is back at home. Well Logitech has been working on improving the Circle home connection camera it launched last year, and the latest upate is pretty smart. Their thinking is that there's no need to miss the goings on back home, just because you're commuting to work or down the pub! The Cirle is wireless, rechargable and learns the patterns of activity around your house to alert you only to interesting things. Like a burglar.



Crosley Dansette Bermuda

$250 (£164) // CROSLEYRADIO.COM // AVAILABLE, NOW

Now we're all for a bit of retro tech in Geeky Monkey, but we normally only go back as far as the 1980s. Crosley has pushed the time machine back even further, we're guessing to the 1950s, with their Dansette Bermuda turntable. While it really looks retro with yellowing plastic knobs and canvas coating, perched on little legs, underneath there's a top turntable that will belt out your tunes via the built in stereo speakers. In this day and age though, this turntable is missing one essential piece of kit – a USB socket to convert your LPs to digital.



Nintendo Classic Mini

FROM £50 // NINTENDO.CO.UK // AVAILABLE, 11 NOVEMBER

Nintendo will always be the Kings of gaming in our minds, innovating from the very beginnings of videogaming, ever since that ape threw a barrel at a carpenter in 1981 (yes, Mario was a carpenter before he was a plumber)! So it's great to see them getting in on the retro collectables game themselves with this mini-NES that comes with 30 pre-installed games and a controller. For £50 you only get one controller, but extra ones can be bought, the amazing thing is you will be playing classics in HD! We know what we want from Santa!

DRONE MAGAZINE



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"SPIDER-MAN, SPIDER-MAN, DOES WHATEVER A SPIDER CAN, SPINS A WEB, ANY SIZE, CATCHES THIEVES JUST LIKE FLIES, LOOK OUT! HERE COMES THE SPIDER-MAN!"



SPIDER-MAN
// 1967-1970

network
ABC

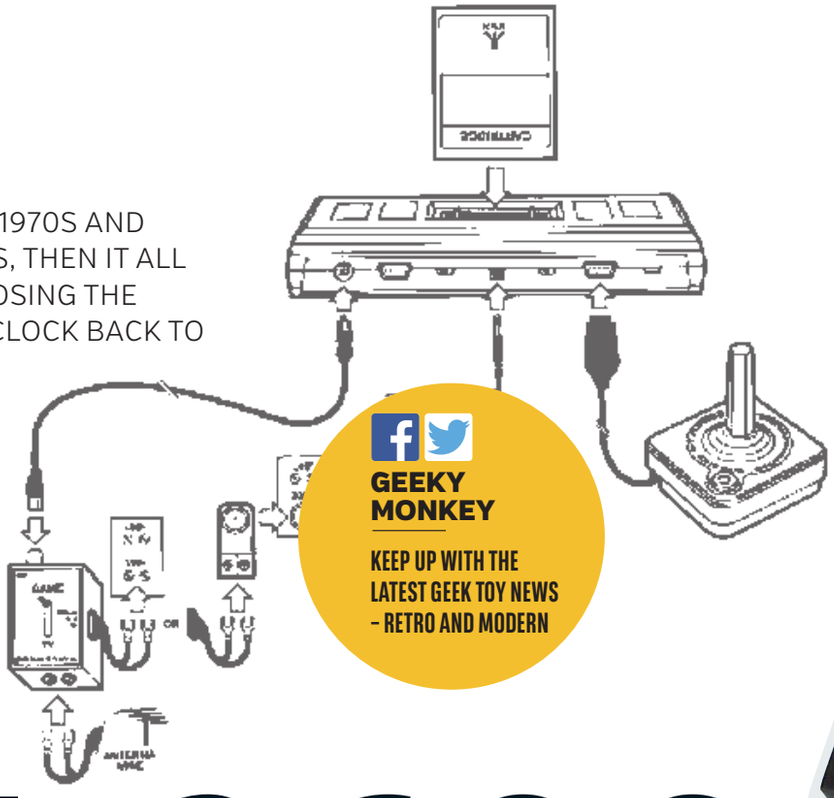
created by
STORY // **STAN LEE**
ART // **STEVE DITKO**
DIRECTOR // **RALPH BAKSHI**

If you grew up in the 1970s and 1980s, your first introduction to Spider-Man was either your dad's comics or the animated series created by comic book supremo Stan Lee and artist Steve Ditko. While the webbed wonder first appeared in the Amazing Fantasy comic in 1962, this was the first time Spider-Man had ever been adapted into a cartoon. You would think that having Stan Lee on board would ensure a faithful cartoon conversion, but the small budgets given to each episode meant a show that was a pale immitation of its comic book origins, but still earned its place in the hearts of superhero-loving kids the world over.

Cheap animation production meant that Spider-Man had no webbing on his costume, just his mask and spider motif. Even then, an error in season one meant the spider motif had only six legs, being corrected to eight for subsequent seasons, but causing continuity errors when footage was reused to cut costs further. We must have seen Spidey swing over the same bit of New York 100s of times.

It wasn't until 1977 that the cartoon arrived in the UK, our Editor remembering fondly how the theme would bring him and his brothers running to the TV on Saturday mornings. The theme tune has permanently ingrained itself on a generation of kids and will be forever the theme to Spider-Man, no matter what music Hollywood use in their movies. "Look out! Here comes the Spider-Man!"

ATARI WAS THE KING OF HOME CONSOLES IN THE 1970S AND EARLY 1980S WITH THEIR 2600 AND 5200 RANGES, THEN IT ALL WENT WRONG FOR THE CALIFORNIA COMPANY, LOSING THE MARKET TO NINTENDO AND SEGA. WE WIND THE CLOCK BACK TO PLAY THE 2600 ONE LAST TIME...

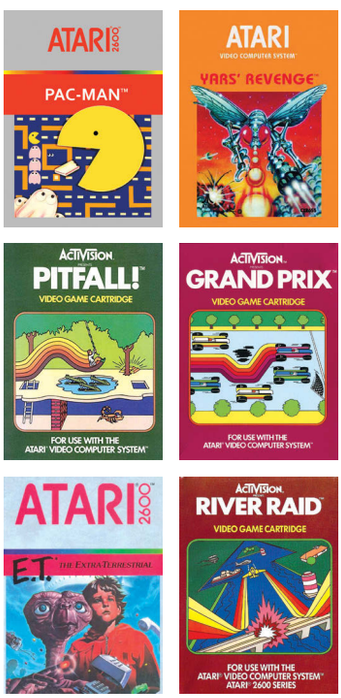


GEEKY MONKEY

KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST GEEK TOY NEWS – RETRO AND MODERN

REMEMBERING...

ATARI 2600



WHAT THE HELL IS AN ATARI 2600?

It's the granddad of all multi-cartridge home game consoles, originating from the Atari VCS system from 1977 (it stands for Video Computer System), but given the 2600 tag when Atari released the 5200 in 1982. Whereas today all modern console tech has to be sleek, usually black or white and with lots of sharp edges and grills, the Atari 2600 had the grill and black plastic right, but finished it off with a wood effect teak veneer. Imagine that on the PlayStation 5! The console came with two joysticks and paddle controllers for Pong-type games, and originally a Combat cartidge in the box. Big games of the day were Pac-Man, Pitfall, Space Invaders, Yars' Revenge, Frogger and Q*bert.

WHY DID YOU WANT IT?

The late Seventies and early Eighties were a boom time for home electronics, and Atari was a frontrunner in the home console race. In fact, it's a tragedy that they are not still making consoles today. The 2600 hit UK shops in 1982, the same year as the ZX Spectrum, but rather than labourous loading from cassettes the Atari console offered instant gaming through cartridges. The console has the operating system and the cartridge the code for the game, with switches on the console accessing variations on the theme – harder difficulty and different course layouts, for example.

IS IT AS AWESOME AS YOU REMEMBER?

Err, actually no. It's not very often we say that in the pages of Geeky Monkey, but playing the Atari 2600 again today is like watching a 1970's sitcom on a black and white TV with rolling picture. It's not a pleasurable experience. Maybe it's because we're so used to seeing pixel-perfect reactions of these classic games on our iPads and computer screens, or maybe it's that the gameplay was so basic back then, the human race has moved on in its tastes and there's no going back. E.T. is legendary for being the worst Atari 2600 game of all time, but we've been playing Pac-Man, the best selling game with seven million copies sold and it's honestly the worst version of Pac-Man we've ever experienced. The animation on Pac breaks his eyeball and each time he catches a chunky ghost on the chunky maze he flips around in a animation glitch. In 1982 you could get better Pac-Man clones by typing in listings from computer magazines.

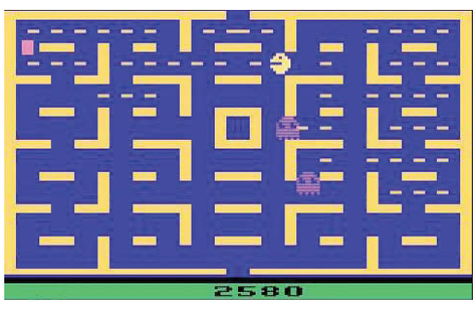
CAN I GET ONE?

The Atari 2600 is really only worth getting if you are a retro gaming completionist, which let's face it all retro gaming collectors are. We paid £50 for a working model with three carts, joypad and power.

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TODAY ALL MODERN CONSOLE TECH HAS TO BE SLEEK, USUALLY BLACK OR WHITE AND WITH LOTS OF SHARP EDGES AND GRILLS, THE ATARI 2600 HAD THE GRILL AND BLACK PLASTIC RIGHT, BUT FINISHED IT OFF WITH A WOOD EFFECT TEAK VENEER





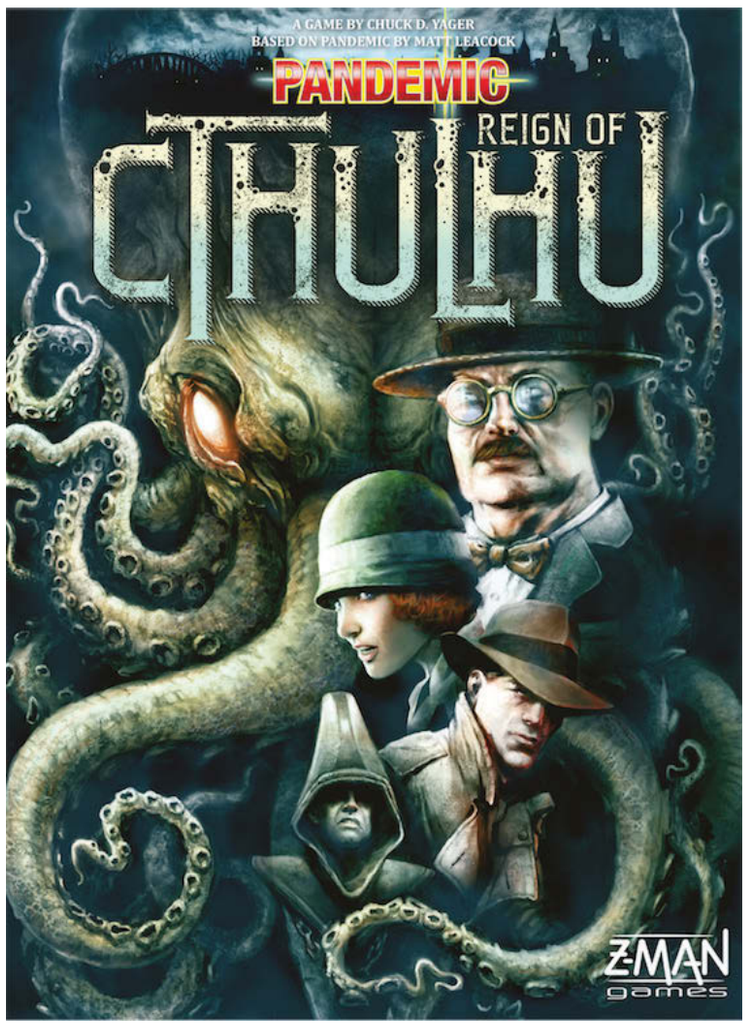
Sadly, this is the one time we have to report that playing a retro console just shattered our memories of hours spent gaming in the 80s.





TABLETOP

Words: ROB BURMAN
Rob is the editor of Tabletop Gaming magazine



IS IT ALL ABOARD THE HYPE TRAIN OR SHOULD WE PULL THE EMERGENCY CORD?

Ticket to Ride is a game that surely you must all know about, right? It's up there with Settlers of Catan or Carcassonne in the category of gateway games that everyone really must try when they're taking their first bold steps away from the likes of Monopoly and into the welcoming arms of more strategic tabletop games. Alan R. Moon's take on building railway tracks across North America is like a fluffy blanket that you can snuggle up in and feel warm in the tabletop world. So, when Days of Wonder announced it was releasing a new Ticket to Ride with the biggest map ever(!) there was a collective dropping of jaws and the spontaneous opening of wallets... however, is bigger always better?

The simple answer is not necessarily... but we should probably explain why. In Ticket to Ride: Rails & Sails (Days of Wonder, £59.99) you are now responsible for not only charting train routes across countries but also hooking them up to lucrative shipping routes around the globe. You do this in a similar way to the original game, i.e. drawing coloured cards from a pile so you've got enough plastic train pieces in order to 'capture' the corresponding coloured route. However, the twist here is that you've also got to collect ferries in order to claim the shipping routes. This means there's more to juggle in terms of resources and it's necessary to plan further ahead.

As a result there's definitely a lot more strategy to Rails & Sails but, in some ways, this is actually one of its drawbacks. The original Ticket to Ride is brilliant because it's so simple to pick up and is over in around an hour. However, here there's more to get to grips with and the playtime is much longer. For gaming groups looking for an extra challenge, this is likely to go down well, but for those just starting in the hobby it's probably better to stick to the first game.

Talking of well-known games, another that regularly makes it onto the list of great gateway games is Matt



THERE'S DEFINITELY A LOT MORE STRATEGY TO RAILS & SAILS BUT, IN SOME WAYS, THIS IS ACTUALLY ONE OF ITS DRAWBACKS

EVEN PANDEMIC ISN'T SAFE FROM A LOVECRAFTIAN MAKEOVER BUT, YOU KNOW WHAT, IT WORKS BRILLIANTLY

Leacock's Pandemic, which sees people working together in order to stop viruses sweeping around the globe and killing everyone… it's cheerier than it sounds, honestly. Well, Matt is back with a new take on the classic formula, thanks to Pandemic: Reign of Cthulhu (Z-Man Games, £46.99). Yes, even Pandemic isn't safe from a Lovecraftian makeover but, you know what, it works brilliantly here as terrible cults attempt to revive the Old Ones and bring about the end of the world. You see, rather than just stopping viruses, here you're travelling round the board attempting to stop the cultists by using particular cards, while also trying to close the four portals that Cthulhu and his pals are trying to use to enter our world. The theme is absolutely spot-on here, particularly with the use of an insanity mechanic that will see your character slowly lose their grip on reality as they witness the many horrors. If you're a huge fan of Pandemic or can't get enough Lovecraft in your life, this is a must!

Finally this issue, how do you fancy playing the board game equivalent of Candy Crush? For some we imagine that might sound like torture but trust us when we say that Potion Explosion (Horrible Games, £46.99) is absolutely brilliant. It features a very clever mechanic that involves marbles rolling down a chute and when two of same colours connect they 'explode' (well you remove them). It's gloriously addictive and great fun. **GM**

Enter the final exams in a potion class with a game of Potion Explosion from Horrible Games, great for all the family.

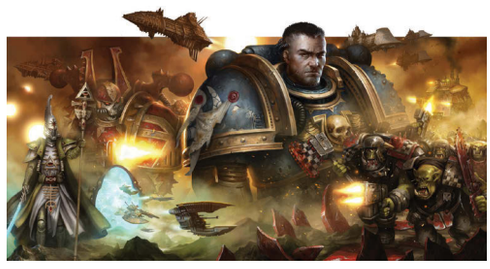




GAMES WORKSHOP AND FANTASY FLIGHT SPLIT

We tend not to report on industry news here in Geeky Monkey, but this is something that affects your upcoming gaming pick-ups. That's because Fantasy Flight (makers of the X-Wing Miniatures Game, Mansions of Madness, and more) has parted ways with Games Workshop (creators of Warhammer Fantasy and 40k). Up until now Fantasy Flight has made a number of games based on Games Workshop IP (Forbidden Stars, Warhammer Quest: The Adventure Card Game) but the break up means that from February next year, Fantasy Flight will no longer produce any of its licensed Games Workshop products.

"Games Workshop has been a fantastic partner for the past eight years, and we're thrilled that we had the opportunity to work together and bring so many new and exciting games into the world. As much as we have enjoyed creating these games, our current licensing term is coming to an end," explained Fantasy Flight. Could the break-up have something to do with Fantasy Flight's foray into mass battle fantasy games with its upcoming Rune Wars, which will be in almost direct competition with Games Workshop's Age of Sigmar? Well, we couldn't possibly comment…





WIN THE EXCLUSIVE KICKSTARTER EDITION OF THE WALKING DEAD: ALL OUT WAR

Thanks to Mantic Games we've got a dead good prize to give away. One lucky winner will receive the exclusive Kickstarter Edition of The Walking Dead, which can't be bought in stores and comes with more than 40 miniatures and 3D terrain! To be in with a chance of winning this amazing prize, it's our usual competition rules. You need to either go to:

A. Facebook: Visit our Facebook page at **facebook.com/geekymonkeymag** then Like, Share and Comment on the competition post before emailing us the answer to The Walking Dead question.

OR

B. Twitter: Go to **twitter.com/thegeekymonkey**, Like and Retweet th0e competition Tweet then answer the question.

We'll draw the winners on 25 November. Good luck!

TERMS & CONDITIONS: This competition is open to readers of Geeky Monkey residing in the UK and Ireland. Employees of Uncooked Media Ltd and their families are not eligible to enter. One winner will be selected on 25 November 2016 and contacted via their Facebook or Twitter account. Prizes will be delivered to mainland UK and Ireland addresses only, and Uncooked Media Ltd reserves the right to withdraw one or all prizes without notification. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



BECOME A SURVIVOR IN THE WALKING DEAD: ALL OUT WAR, THE NEW TABLETOP GAME INSPIRED BY THE HIT COMIC SERIES...

Skip back a few years and Ronnie Renton, CEO of Mantic Games, the Nottingham-based miniatures maker responsible for the Mars Attacks game and fantasy battle game Kings of War, is sitting reading The Walking Dead comics and discussing with his teenage son what the company's next big license should be. "We need something that's hugely popular, would make a great game and we can make some fantastic models," he says with a look of confusion. Thankfully, his son isn't so slow on the uptake and points to the comic he's reading... "there's your next game, dad... The Walking Dead."

From that small conversation, the wheels went into overdrive at Mantic and Ronnie managed to organise a meeting with Skybound, the guys behind The Walking Dead comics where he could pitch the game. "By this point I had rough idea of how I wanted the game to play," he explains. "Instead of being Survivors against the Walkers, it would be gangs of Survivors struggling against each other for the limited resources left after the outbreak, while the Walkers would be a kind of background threat that can potentially be avoided but, when they have you in their sights, the danger quickly escalates."

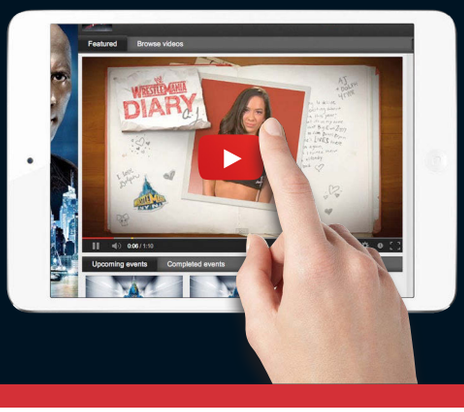
After spending several months waiting, Ronnie eventually got the go ahead from Skybound and turned to Kickstarter to fund the game. Mantic raised $685,000 in February this year and is now poised to release The Walking Dead: All Out War in stores. A little like the X-Wing Miniatures games, you can pick up a core set that comes with key characters Rick Grimes and his son Carl, along with more than a dozen Walkers and extra Survivors... however, that's only the beginning and you can also collect different booster packs and expansions to add the likes of Lori, Dale, Shane and Michonne to your band of Survivors.

The game itself is a skirmish wargame in which you create a small team of Survivors before equipping them with various guns or armour, then taking on a rival band of people. However, you can't go in all guns blazing because Walkers are controlled by a simple AI mechanic that sees them moving towards noise and then automatically attacking any Survivors foolish to get too close. The result is an experience that recreates the tense situations from the comic in the safety of your living room, rather than on the streets of Atlanta. **GM**



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JAPAN BODY

A LOOK AT BODY HORROR USUALLY FOCUSES ON THE CLASSICS AND THEIR DIRECTORS: CRONENBERG, BARKER, CRONENBERG, GORDON, CRONENBERG... BUT NOT ALL FILM INDUSTRIES REVOLVE AROUND HOLLYWOOD, AND DIFFERENT COUNTRIES HAVE THEIR OWN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT MAKES SOMETHING HORRIFIC. TIME TO TAKE A LOOK AT BODY HORROR IN A DIFFERENT CONTEXT, IN A COUNTRY KNOWN MORE FOR SPOOKY, DARK-HAIRED GHOSTS THAN MUTATIONS, MUTILATIONS AND DISFIGUREMENT...

A teenager feels a creature burrowing into his right arm, screams and tries to get rid of it. The next day he thinks it could have been a dream, until his hand deforms, sprouts eyes and a mouth and starts talking to him...

Two children confidently conduct a ritual they believe will bring their mother back from the dead. When the youngest regains consciousness his brother's limbs are bleeding stumps and in the ritual circle lies a jagged mass of flesh and hair with an arm reaching out from a pool of blood...

Invisible magic forces lift a girl in the air and wrench each of her limbs around 360 degrees until the bones snap, then start twisting her head...

A student tries to eat and vomits, yet again; since having surgery his stomach has rebelled against all his previously favourite foods, but the people around him smell delicious...

These are all scenarios from popular anime on Japanese television, most adapted from successful Japanese comics. Some were broadcast late at night, as you might expect. Some have been

©JAPAN HOME VIDEO



HORROR

Words: AMELIA COOK

Amelia is a film and television writer with a background in Japanese Studies and too many blogs on anime.

run and re-run during daytime hours, aimed at children. Needless to say, body horror in Japan works quite differently from body horror in the English speaking world. Not because Japan or Japanese people are any more weird, but because their industry is set up differently.

THE HISTORY OF BODY HORROR AND JAPAN

Body horror is a sub-genre of horror centred on the violation, transformation and destruction of the human body. Such scenarios have always been used to provoke strong emotional responses, from the ugly sisters slicing off pieces of their feet to fit into Cinderella's slipper to Lavinia's hands and tongue being cut off by her rapists in Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus to Robert Louis Stevenson's Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. This isn't new. In the 20th century, however, we developed film technology and visual effects good enough to show these horrors with some sense of realism in a Hays Code-free world.

Common body horror premises include degenerating from disease, mutating into something non-human, being controlled by something alien or mutilated by human tools. Early cinematic body horror texts are the original versions of Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956), The Blob (1958) and The Fly (1958), remade in 1978, 1988 and 1989 respectively. Other classics include the Alien series, the zombie films of George A. Romero and the filmography of David Cronenberg. These days we are as likely to see body horror in television shows, such as in Hannibal, The Walking Dead and even glossy teen drama The Vampire Diaries.

There are certain concepts more likely to be used for body horror (werewolves, the undead, cyborgs, torture) but even established body horror premises can be applied in non-horrific contexts. Warm Bodies (2013) is a zombie romance, while the horror of the Twilight franchise lies in everything but its vampire and werewolf elements. From the opposite side, most superhero stories could be reworked as body horror, but the last time a well-regarded director of body horror took the helm of a superhero franchise we ended up with Spider-Man 3. Body horror is all about the presentation.

Body horror is often a metaphor for some societal condition or fear. The critically-acclaimed remake of The Fly was released in 1989, ▸



a story of a man's body being slowly destroyed when AIDS was still a high profile mystery illness. Invasion of the Body Snatchers can be read as an allegory for McCarthy-era America and panic over Communism, while metaphors of sexuality and motherhood have been identified in the Alien films. In Japanese cinema the closest cousin of these films is Tetsuo: The Iron Man (1989), Shinya Tsukamoto's graphic film of a man who mutates into a being of metal and wires. The influence of technology on the individual is a cyberpunk theme, here applied to graphic body horror to great effect.

Another classic example in Japanese cinema is the seminal Akira (1988), an anime set in a post-World War 3 Neo-Tokyo which reflects the instabilities of post-World War 2 Japan. If you've never seen the film or read the manga it was based on, you may still recognise it from its place in Hollywood development hell, where it has festered since 2002 in large part because of the budget required to faithfully reproduce its most iconic visuals in live action. This is a big obstacle for body horror, and one reason pure body horror is so rare in television and cinema: showing the human body infested, disintegrated or warped beyond recognition is expensive.

In Japan, however, creators are not restricted by the constraints of human actors, make-up and computer generated effects to transform the human body into something monstrous. More importantly, playing with such ideas is not a high budget risk the way it is for Akira rights-holder Warner Brothers; all it takes is one artist with one story published in one magazine.

Manga is a huge and established industry in Japan, with a clear influence over cinema, television and, of course, anime. Unlike superhero comics, which are Marvel or DC properties handled by a number of different creators with their own interpretations in a tangle of timelines, manga are usually the vision of a single storyteller who is also the artist. While the concept will be shaped and approved by editors, the sheer breadth of the manga market means that every well-executed idea has at least one potential outlet for distribution.

Manga artists generally serialise their comics a chapter at a time in manga compilation magazines released weekly and monthly. These magazines already have a reader base, which will be following other serialised stories of a similar type and willing to take a chance spending ten minutes reading a new work. If they like the manga well enough they may buy its books, which will contain a handful of chapters plus some bonus notes and drawings from the author. If a manga becomes popular enough, it could end up on the big screen, small screen or even stage – and all from a single person's vision.

The widespread acceptance of comics and cartoons as media for adults has led to a much stronger infrastructure to support the weird and macabre in Japan's creative industries than in Hollywood's. As a result, body horror is a more integrated concept than in the west. Without an impact on the budget to consider, you can include a throwaway moment of disturbing gore or structure an entire series around a premise that would be prohibitively expensive in live action television. The result is body horror existing on multiple levels: pure body horror, hybrid body horror/another genre and body horror as a moment or an episode within another genre.

BODY HORROR IN ANIME AND MANGA

The go-to example for straight body horror in anime and manga is Parasyte -the maxim-, the first scenario in the list at the very start of this article. In Parasyte, a boy's arm is invaded by an alien creature which changes its shape and forms a face with eyeballs, teeth and tongue to speak through his hand, or morphs the limb to battle other aliens. It was actually trying to get to his brain, and we see this process managed successfully by others of his species. Once fully taken over, a human or animal host appears and acts almost the same as before, just slightly unnatural – until their face splits from the centre and opens like a flower bud into strips of flesh with teeth. We see this for the first time before the opening credits of the first episode.

However, most body horror you see in anime exists on the other end of the spectrum, in pockets showing up in shows of other genres. Again, body horror is all about the presentation, and there are concepts found in children's anime – such as a character in One Piece whose arm disconnects and extends on a chain – which would be horrifying if played straight but are instead played for laughs.

In anime and manga it is very simple to literally draw blood, leading to mutation and mutilation folded into the regular action for many popular children's heroes. Child-friendly horror is not a

©TOHO





Katsuhiro Otomo's Akira has been stuck in Hollywood development hell for 14 years, partly because recreating the body horror scenes would be so expensive.

IF A MANGA BECOMES POPULAR ENOUGH, IT COULD END UP ON THE BIG SCREEN, SMALL SCREEN OR EVEN STAGE – AND ALL FROM A SINGLE PERSON'S VISION

Japanese quirk; think of Roald Dahl's witches peeling off their faces at the dinner table or Voldemort appearing out of the back of Professor Quirrell's head. Children love horrific concepts, and anime creatives know how to supply them.

Naruto is the children's show with the most body horror aspects, with the main character possessed by a monster spirit which morphs parts of his body into its own features and causes him to bleed through his skin when he loses his sense of self. Another character in the same situation submits completely to the murderous nature of the spirit within him, killing humans without blinking. This character is also transformed when he loses control: one side of his body bursts into the monster's arm, tail and half his face, leading to some imagery which would not be out of place in Akira.

Naruto also has characters who are the human hosts to hives of insects, characters who grow their own bones to pull out of their skin and use as weapons, characters who can enter their enemy's body and physically emerge from any point on their body with knife in hand at cutthroat distance... None of this is treated as horror, just action, but any of these characters could be the star of their own body horror film in western cinema.

It is very common for anime to take one episode away from their usual tone, giving us swimsuit episodes on one end of the spectrum and trauma episodes on the other. In the list of scenarios at the start of this piece, Fullmetal Alchemist is the show about small children trying to raise their mother from the dead, the origin story of the main characters. Despite targeting a young audience, the backstory episode shows their skin unravelling, faces and limbs penetrated by long shadows with tiny hands, blood spilling from ripped-off stumps and the resurrected mass with a gaping skull and demonic eyes. From the next episode onwards it is back to its usual action adventure tone.

Also common is for an anime's tone to shift as the show goes on. This year we have had Re:ZERO -Starting Life in Another World- which brings a teenager from Japan to a world of magic, maids and dragon-drawn carriages. It seems like a regular fantasy escapist show until the main character realises that the world functions like a videogame for him, with death bringing him back to 'save points' where only he remembers the events before he was killed. Death is painful, terrifying and unavoidable, taking its toll on the main character each time. He veers from brash and cheerful in some moments to agonised and introspective in others, exactly as the ▸



LIVE ACTION JAPANESE BODY HORROR RECOMMENDATIONS

Japanese body horror is not all anime and manga. If you prefer your body horror fleshy, these might be for you...

Want respected cinema? Check out Takashi Miike's romantic horror Audition (1999) and the ultra-violent Ichi the Killer (2001).

Low budget splatter? Try Yoshihiro Nishimura's Tokyo Gore Police (2008), Mutant Girls Squad (2009), or Vampire Girl vs. Frankenstein Girl (2009).

Mixed genres? Try Ryuichi Kitamura's Sky High (2003), Versus (2000) and, as a bonus, his Hollywood adaptation of Clive Barker's The Midnight Meat Train (2008).



Animals and insects are all fair game as body part donors to amateur surgeon Franken-Fran.

IF YOU WANT KNOW WHAT'S NEXT FOR BODY HORROR IN JAPAN, KEEP AN EYE ON MANGA THAT HAVE NOT YET BEEN ADAPTED FOR TELEVISION



Tetsuo: The Iron Man is one of the few Japanese body horror films to receive recognition and critical acclaim in the west.

THE MANGA MASTERY OF JUNJI ITO

Junji Ito is the undisputed master of body horror in manga, one of the few artists whose work is available to buy in the UK.

2000 // STUDIO, OMEGA MICOTT

UZUMAKI



Uzumaki is a movie about a town cursed by spirals from 2000. The unique story has residents becoming obsessed by spirals then being killed by their entire bodies contorting into spirals. It was adapted into a live action film and videogame.

2012 // STUDIO, UFOTABLE

GYO



Originally a horror manga written and illustrated by Junji Ito, it's about a young couple caught in a crisis of fish growing legs, running on land and attacking humans. It has been adapted into a one-off anime. Viz Media published an English version of the manga.

1999-2011 // STUDIO, DAIEI

TOMIE



The first of Junji Ito's work to be published, in Monthly Halloween magazine in 1987, Tomie is about a young woman with the power to seduce any man and regenerate when killed. It has been adapted into a series of films and the manga is available from Viz Media.

show's tone fluctuates from slapstick comedy to near torture porn. The scenario of a character's limbs and head being twisted around 360 degrees comes from Re:ZERO, and strikes a different note to the types of violence seen from the first episode.

Bridging this gap are action shows incorporating or based on a premise of body mutation or mutilation. For example, replacing a hand or an arm with a weapon is a common trope, with characters attaching a gun where a limb should be like a technologically advanced Captain Hook. However, in some anime these weapons are either completely biological, forming naturally from the character's body as in Trigun, or use technology so advanced that the limb appears normal most of the time then can transform into something mechanical and deadly, as in Project ARMS. The plot is driven by the need of characters to identify what could trigger their powers so they can try to learn to control them.

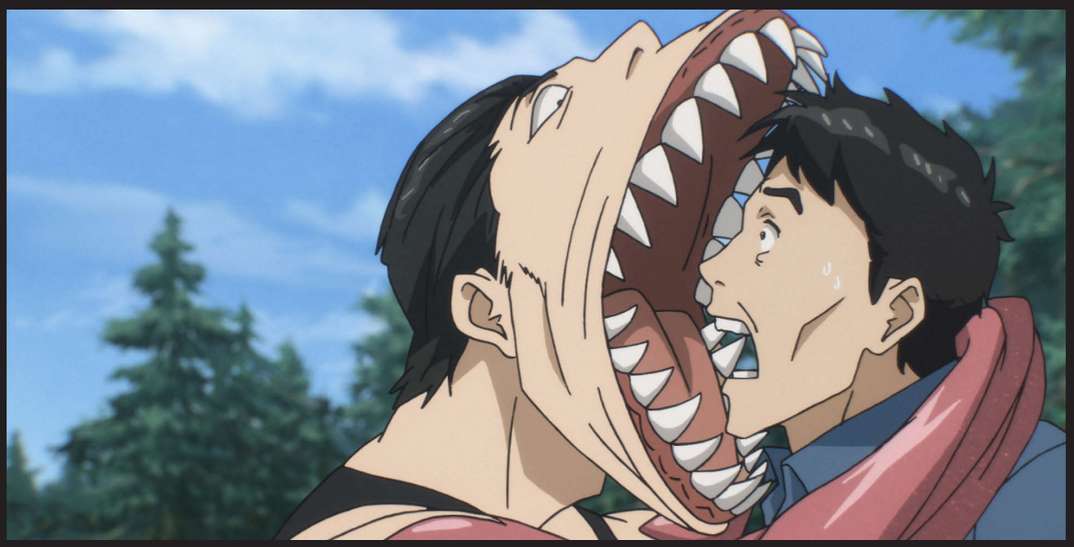
Saikano: The Last Love Song on this Little Planet is a good example of a hybrid body horror/other genre concept, with the other genre being 'high school romance'. Saikano tells the story of a girl who is selected by the government to be transformed into the ultimate weapon, able to transform into and/or extend weapons from her body. Over the course of the series she becomes colder and more clinical, losing her humanity. The story is a romance, told from the point of view of her boyfriend, but the breakdown of her body and personality from human to machine has more in common with Tetsuo: The Iron Man than Full Metal Panic.

The struggle to retain one's humanity is a staple element of such anime, from children's shows like Naruto to more adult-oriented shows like Tokyo Ghoul, the source of another of the scenarios listed at the start. Tokyo Ghoul's main character begins as a normal human but ends up in hospital after he and a ghoul trying to eat his flesh are

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Humans in Gyo end up bloated and strapped to mechanical walking machines, force-fed their own faeces through tubes.



New Line Cinema acquired the rights to Parasyte in 2005, letting them expire in 2013 without managing to make a live action adaptation.

injured. That ghoul's organs are transplanted to his body and when he wakes up he is unable to eat food, vomiting if he tries. He refuses to eat human flesh for as long as he can, getting weaker as he starves, but must eventually succumb to cannibalism to survive.

There are so many anime which address this internal struggle of human versus monster, including Kabaneri of the Iron Fortress, Ajin: Demi-Human and Mob Psycho 100 from new anime this year alone. This use of body horror as a premise is certainly linked to a societal condition or fear: these characters are generally stigmatised and isolated in some way, provoking terror or disgust, and need to learn how to navigate these social pressures as well as control the malevolent strength inside them. Losing control has destructive consequences, for them and the people they love. However, achieving that balance and control leads to exceptional rewards.

It's unsurprising how popular this theme is when you consider that Japanese companies are generally unsupportive of exceptionalism, structured instead to reward conformity. Manga is an industry of auteurs either working in such offices until they get their big break or taking on only low paid, temporary work to be easily dropped once their manga becomes successful. It makes sense that these creators would want to explore the advantages and disadvantages of exceptionalism, plus struggling to control internal negativity is a universal experience. It's a solid template which has been used time and time again to integrate body horror elements meaningfully into manga and then anime for a range of audiences.

PURE BODY HORROR IN JAPAN

For undiluted body horror though, manga's auteur-driven industry still has the edge over anime. If you want know what's next for body horror in Japan, keep an eye on manga that have not yet been adapted for television, such as black comedy Franken-Fran about a young Frankenstein's monster-type girl who is also an amateur surgeon. She makes a commitment to do whatever is necessary to sustain a life in any form, leading to a companion with the head of a human on the body of a cat, a puppy's brain in a dead middle aged man's body and wounded people being sewn together to survive. It doesn't matter how practical the solution is; if they can continue to live then her job is done.

Kurosaki Corpse Delivery Service is about a team of recent graduates who run a business speaking to the recently deceased – who may have been brutally murdered or died in a gruesome accident – then trying to fulfil their last wishes. It was announced in 2009 that Universal Studios had bought the rights to develop Kurosaki Corpse Delivery Service for a live action film. Nothing has been heard since then, but did I mention that recreating body horror with real humans is expensive?

The freedom, support and commercial validation the manga industry offers artists puts it at the forefront of body horror. Even so, many popular books in Japan are left untranslated because demand for such a niche in the English speaking market is relatively low. However, the way Japan's creative industries are set up means that true body horror stories will continue to be published whether we have access to them or not, and as the market for manga grows and consumption becomes more digital, it is more and more likely that these works will reach us at some point. As soon as visual effects become more affordable manga will be a rich source for Hollywood studios to mine, and producers will finally be able to achieve their Japanese body horror ambitions: spending millions to replicate what was created by a single artist with a twisted imagination. **GM**

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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

BROADCAST, 1983-1985 // NETWORK, CBS // SEASONS, 3 // EPISODES, 27

FEAR NOT...

Words: NICK ROBERTS

Geeky Monkey Editor and 80's throwback

For those of us who are of a certain age, early 80's cartoons bring a warm and fuzzy glow. Memories of teatime after school, children's television on in the background and ears pricking up when the unmistakable theme tune of your favourite cartoon starts. Dungeons & Dragons was one such show, the fairgound music at the start of the title sequence marked the beginning of an adventure, and kids all over the country were glued to the screen.

Based on the famous role-playing game, Dungeons & Dragons was the story of six friends who were excited to climb aboard the Dungeons & Dragons roller coaster ride at a theme park, only for it to quickly turn to horror as the track melts away and they are transported to another realm. Things don't get any better when a little dwarf of a man with long white hair and a bald head exclaims, "Fear not: Ranger, Barbarian, Magician, Thief, Cavalier and Acrobat. That was Venger, the force of evil. I am Dungeon Master, your guide in the realm of Dungeons and Dragons!" Err, thanks mate, what the hell is going on?

So each kid has a special weapon to use as they battle the forces of evil in the realm they find themselves in. Hank is 15 years old and becomes the Ranger, with a magical bow that fires glowing arrows, presumably because at 15 he can be trusted with such a lethal device! Eric is younger, and becomes a Cavalier with a magic shield. Sheila is given the role of Thief, so she can become invisible by raising her hood, a handy trick in an evil realm. Then 14-year-old Diana is an Acrobat, able to spring about the place using a long staff. Presto, or Albert back in the real world, is also 14 and has the task of team Magician, only he's not very good at it. Then there's little Bobby, at only eight he's young and naive, so let's give him a large club and call him the Barbarian! Social services would have a field day with this lot! Finally, every cartoon needs an amuzing animal sidekick, and Uni, a baby unicorn, runs into Bobby's arms in the first episode and follows the team ever after. Actually, Uni steals the show. Most of the battles the friends fight in the Realm of Dungeons & Dragons stem from the main antagonist, Venger. You can see where J. K. Rowling got her inspiration for Lord Voldemort as this white faced figure with no nose declares himself the Force of Evil and a powerful wizard. We learn through the three seasons that Venger was once good but succumbed to a corrupting influence. Tom Riddle anyone?

All the children want to do throughout the 27 episodes that were made between 1983 and 1985 by Marvel Productions, is get home. Now here comes the tragedy, as I rediscovered when watching the last season for this feature: they never get home! A final episode titled Requiem was written and planned where Venger was revealed to actually be Dungeon Master's son, he is restored to his old self, the children escape from the Realm and return back to reality. How could they not make this episode? It's the pay off that all 80's children needed. Otherwise, evil has won! Let's start a campaign... **GM**

The complete animated series of 27 episodes of Dungeons & Dragons was released on DVD from Entertainment One in 2004.

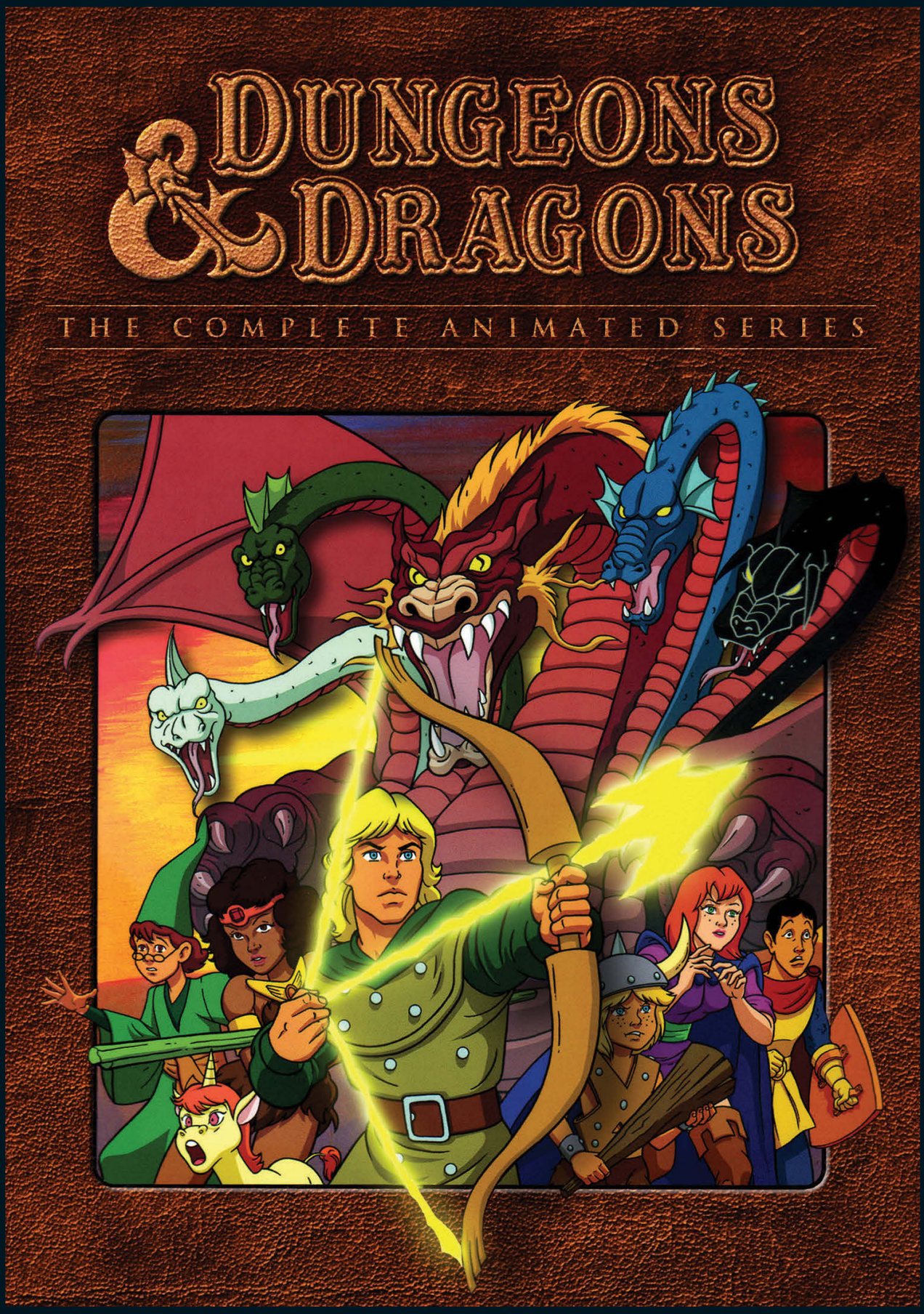
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WARGAMES

YEAR, 1983 // STUDIO, MGM/UA // DIRECTOR, JOHN BADHAM
STARRING, MATTHEW BRODERICK, DABNEY COLEMAN

GLOBAL THERMONUCLEAR WAR?

Words: HUGH DAVID
Hugh has watched every cult movie... at least twice.

WarGames is, along with Scanners, one of the key proto-hacking movies; released against Return of the Jedi, it so very nearly could have been a forgotten flop, a grounded near-future fiction up against the third in the box-office-record-smashing FX-heavy sci-fantasy series. Changing director halfway through, having to scrap the original pop songs being prepared for the soundtrack, full of jargon and ideas unfamiliar to most of the public, it's amazing the final film is as entertaining as it actually is, or that it's come to have an enduring reputation that is well-earned (it was nominated for three Oscars, two BAFTAs (winning one) and six Saturns, one of which final director John Badham won). Part of that, however, has to do with the timeliness of the tale, and the time of its release.

Matthew Broderick and Ally Sheedy, who would go onto (different) John Hughes 80's teen classics after this, star as American high school kids who bite off more than they can chew when the former hacks the school's mainframe to change both of their course grades. While phone phreaking and generally exploring what's around him "online" via the telephone cable network, he makes contact via a back door line with Joshua, who turns out to be the U.S. military's main tactical supercomputer, part of the then-little-known underground bunker housing NORAD (North American Defense Command). What he thinks is just a nuclear wargame with another computer turns into something far more real and frightening...

Up-and-coming director Martin Brest, who would go on to hit big after this with Beverley Hills Cop, began shooting a much darker thriller from the typewriters of Lawrence Lasker and former documentarian Walter F. Parkes, something that would fit with other films in the nuclear doomsday sub-genre. So much of the finished film is still attributable to him, including all but one of the casting choices and some scenes still in it, but he fell out with the producer and was replaced by Anglo-American John Badham, a TV director who had broken into features in a big way with disco zeitgeist movie Saturday Night Fever. He had just done another now-classic techno-thriller, Blue Thunder, and made this film more of an entertaining rollercoaster, balancing the darkness with light, as well as making choices for reasons of style over realism, knowing they would work with an audience. (Watch how Joshua continues to speak in later scenes at NORAD even though there is no speaker set-up as in David's bedroom!) Between the two visions came a quintessential 80's blockbuster, taking something that would have been dark and cynical in the 70s and lightening it up, giving it a teenage protagonist, and (SPOILER ALERT) a happy ending. The nerd even gets the girl!

Broderick and Sheedy are great, if occasionally stilted in their deliveries. The adults around them, from their teacher and his parents to the hackers he goes to for advice to the soldiers, politicians and contractors who people NORAD, are all so well cast they make great impressions, sometimes with very little. (Buck Rogers's Juanin Clay turns what could have been a simple assistant's role into a gum-chewing, smoking, tough-talking executive, while John Spencer and Michael Madsen enliven the tense opener.) The film is at its best when bouncing between youthful humour and the seriousness of the bigger world David and Jennifer connect with, a prescient theme and comprehensible tone for today's internet generation. All the research the writers did would allow them to write another hacker classic, 1992's Sneakers, while the two films are both hugely important to one of modern sci-fi's best looks at AI, the just-finished TV series Person of Interest. Jonathan Nolan and Greg Plageman clearly borrowed several elements of Harold Finch's backstory from these two films, right down to re-phrasing a line from Broderick in WarGames. The Fox MGM blu-ray features a solid transfer and great extras from the 1998 and 2008 DVDs, including what the real-world NORAD thought of the film! **GM**





A NUCLEAR WARGAME WITH ANOTHER COMPUTER TURNS INTO SOMETHING FAR MORE REAL AND FRIGHTENING

WarGames was repackaged and reissued by 20th Century Fox on blu-ray and DVD in 2013.

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MISSILE WARNING



[CLASSIC GAME]

The House of the Dead 2

YEAR, 1998 // FORMAT, ARCADE
// DEVELOPER, SEGA WOW // PUBLISHER, SEGA

As it's the month of the dead, our classic game just has to be Sega's zombie shooting horror extravaganza. Would you believe it if we told you that the first lightgun arcade game dates back to 1936? The Seeburg Ray-O-Lite (that is such a 1930's name) used light-sensing vacuum tubes and placed these onto moving targets. Using a rifle, the player would shoot rays of light and if they hit, BAM! The games evolved over the decades, but it would be SEGA that scored the first big arcade lightgun hit with Periscope, a pre-computers submarine game where cardboard ships were shot down by torpedoes. It was actually the first game to charge a quarter a go in American arcades.

Fast forward to 1994 and lightgun games were changed again by SEGA with Virtua Cop, using polygon graphics instead of sprites, this game popularised the on-the-rails shooter where two people could stand side by side in the arcade and work cooperatively. Virtua Cop led to The House of the Dead in 1996 then the game we're meant to be writing about, The House of the Dead 2 in 1998.

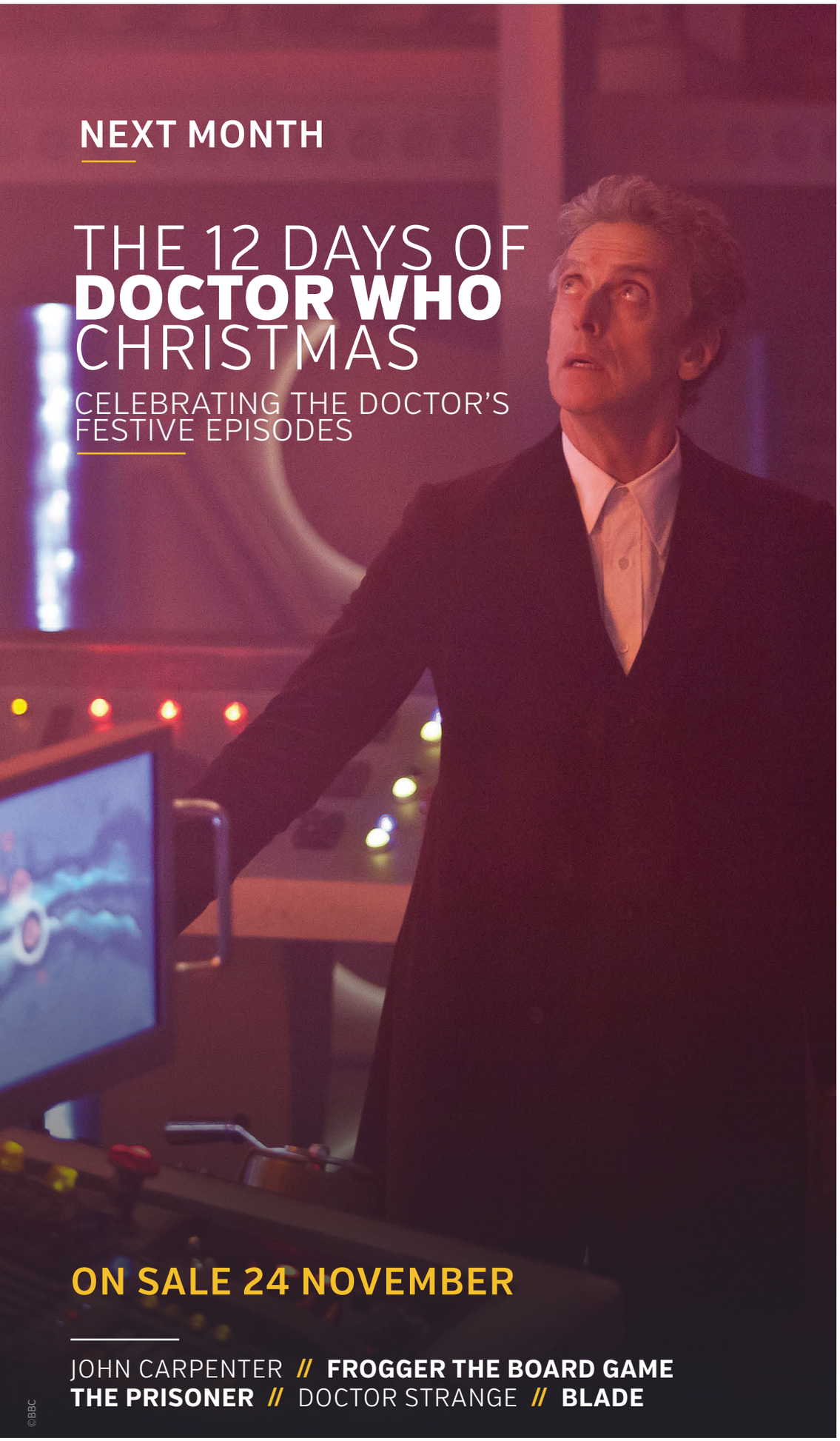
What was different about SEGA's shooting games was that players could aim for specific body parts and see the outcome, which took away the random shooting element that had marred so many lightgun games before. The convoluted stories behind the House of the Dead games didn't really matter - shooting hordes of slimy zombies with headshots, guts shots and taking on some collossal end-of-level bosses was the best arcade horror experience you could have.


PRESS START BUTTON
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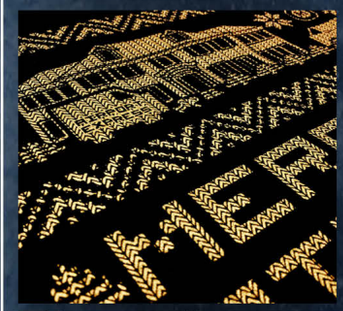


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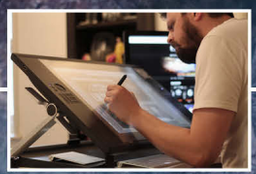












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